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SIDEBOARD

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New World Champion Crowned!

Van de Logt Makes Winning Look Easy

by Toby Wachter

Magic: The Gathering has been around for eight years. That's quite an accomplishment for any game. Indeed, in 1993, it may have seemed that this enjoyable card game would have been long forgotten in the next millennium. Instead, the **Magic** game has evolved into a worldwide phenomenon, boasting millions of players around the globe and a huge tournament circuit that allows the best players to make a living off the game. As the years progressed, tournaments such as the Pro Tour, Grand Prix, and Masters were introduced. As each year passes, it seems that a new innovation is added to the **Magic** tournament system, whether it's a Continental Championship, a team-format Pro Tour, or a new DCI program like Friday Night **Magic**.

Even though many things change, there has been one constant in tournament **Magic**: the World Championships. Before Michael Loconto won the first Pro Tour with his Millstone deck, before The Dojo website ushered in the era of "net decks," and before Jon Finkel was starting to make a name for himself on the Junior Pro Tour, Zak Dolan and Alexander Blumke were **Magic** World Champions. It's a bit hard to think of what Worlds was like before the Pro Tour took off. It was an era when playtesting every day was unheard of and flying across the globe to play in a major tournament seemed like a fantasy to most people. In fact, **Magic** hadn't hit most countries full-force yet, since it took a few years for the game to be released in languages other than English.

Nostalgia aside, it is the year 2001, and the eighth **Magic: The Gathering** World Championships took place in Toronto. A record 54 national teams showed up to represent their countries, hoping to claim the World Championship title. The individual competition also took place and showcased the best players on the Pro Tour. Between these two events, more than $400,000 was up for grabs and every competitor was looking to take some of that money before the week was over.

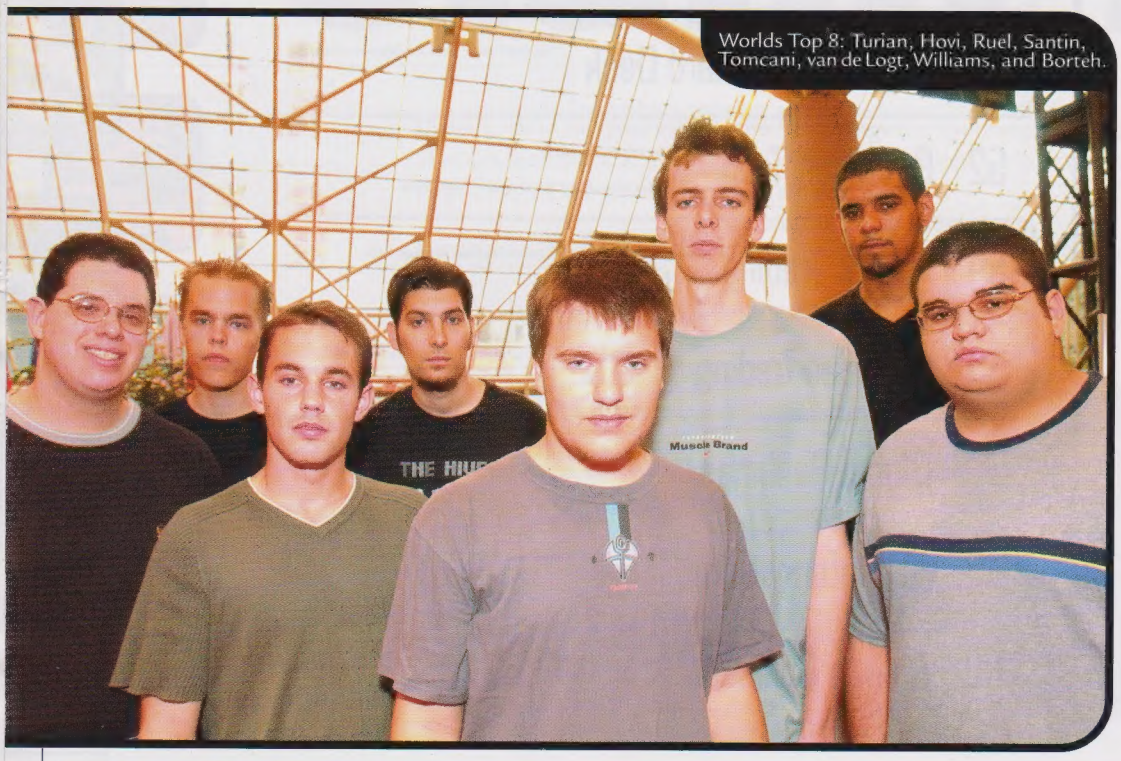
Unlike typical Pro Tour events, Worlds is unique because it requires players to compete in many different formats. On Wednesday, the players brought out their Standard decks; Thursday was Rochester Draft, Friday was Extended; Saturday was the team event; and Sunday was the Top 8 for the individual competition and the finals for the team event. Once those first three grueling days came to an end, some players got to take a break. Others had yet another day of competition ahead of them, as they looked to bring their national teams into the finals on Sunday. Wednesday, when the first day of competition ended, it seemed that everyone in the Metro Toronto Convention Center was convinced that the American team would not walk away with the title. United States Champion Trevor Blackwell couldn't manage a single match win with his "Dark Fires" deck. He finished dead last on the first day of competition, and his teammates Brian Hegstad and Eugene Harvey didn't do much better. The Americans had a combined record of 6-12 heading into the second day of competition. There was plenty of discussion about whether the team could defend its title.

For any other team, a 6-12 record might have been a little disappointing, but for Blackwell, Hegstad, and Harvey, it was entirely unacceptable. The United States has made a tradition of dominating the team event at Worlds and has won it every year except in 1997, when Canada defeated Sweden it in the finals. Anything less than victory would be below the standards set by the Americans in past years.

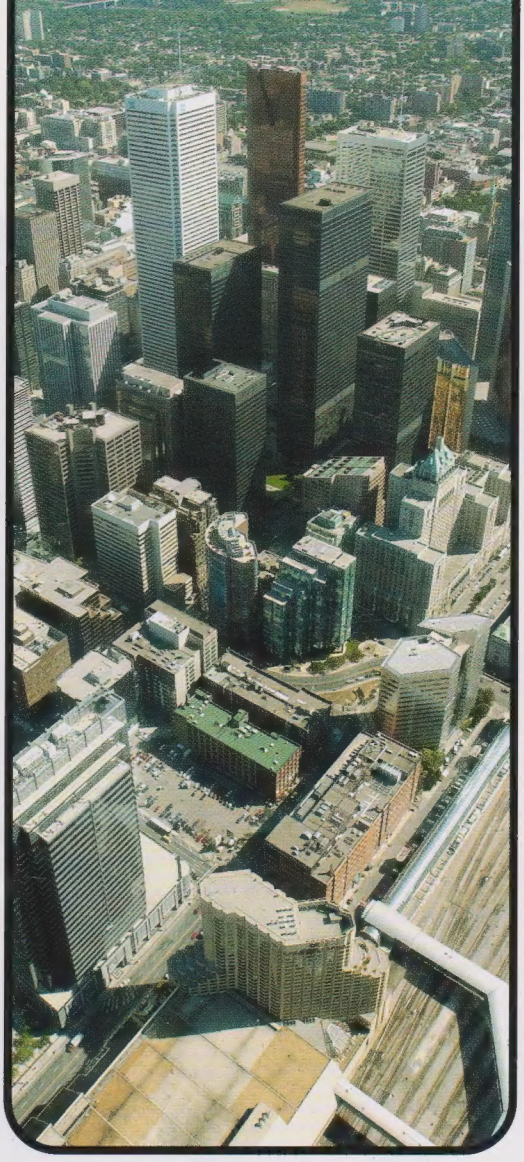
Maybe it was the motivation of having their backs against the wall or just the change in the format, but the Americans came back with a vengeance on the following day and had a combined record of 16-2 in Rochester Draft. As a result of this amazing turnaround, the Americans were back in contention. After the Extended and Team Rochester days played out, the United States began gearing up for Sunday, where it would face off against Team Norway for the Championship.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the team finals was that Team Norway also went 6-12 on Wednesday, and had to fight the same uphill battle to earn its spot onstage Sunday. The irony was that the format for the finals was Standard, and both teams would have to play with the decks that provided them with awful records on the first day of the tournament.

With the cameras rolling, Trevor Blackwell got his first and only Standard win of the weekend with Dark Fires, beating Nicolai Herzog's black-red deck. Jan Pieter Groenhof took down Eugene Harvey's "Fires" deck with "Brawler Ponza," leaving the deciding match between Brian Hegstad and Øyvind Ødegaard. That match went to a third and deciding game, and Hegstad's "Saproling-Opposition" deck locked up Ødegaard's Fires to clinch the Team Championship for the Americans. Blackwell, Hegstad, and Harvey had to have felt some relief once victory was theirs. Second place might be a great finish for most teams, but for the



Worlds Top 8: Turian, Hovi, Ruel, Santin, Tomcani, van de Logt, Williams, and Borteh.



Americans, anything less than first place would be a disappointment and would break a long-standing tradition. Even though the road was bumpy, the Americans were able to keep the tradition alive, and will keep the Team Championship title in the United States . . . at least until next year's World Championships in Sydney, Australia.

The team event definitely provided its share of excitement during Worlds, and the individual competition had plenty of stories as well. Worlds was one of the first events to showcase *Apocalypse* in Standard. A record number of players around the world eagerly followed the action online at **Sideboard.com**, to see which decks would make up the new metagame. For competitors, the task was to make some sense of the new enemy colored gold and split cards that *Apocalypse* provided. For example, Gerrard's Verdict and Vindicate went into black-blue-white "Go-Mar" decks to give them some extra punch, and Fire/Ice found its way into blue-black-red control decks.

However, the bigger story was a rumor that had circulated around on Tuesday, warning players that 180 Yavimaya Coasts had been sold in one day. The result was a complete metagame shift, as players were now in fear of the Saproling-Opposition deck. The post-*Seventh Edition* Standard metagame saw a fair amount of decks that used Static Orb and Opposition to lock opponents down, but most of these decks were monoblue. The difference between these older designs and the Saproling-Opposition deck is that Saproling-Opposition runs no creatures other than the ones generated by spells. The result is that the deck has more space for control cards and can function like a combo deck. Players knew this deck was powerful and feared it. Consequently, many players decided to run anti-Saproling-Opposition decks such as "Machine Head" in anticipation of the field.

Even with all this chaos surrounding the Standard metagame, one old friend remained. Fires still managed to find its way to the top, as Gert Coeckelbergh and Jan Tomcani both played different versions of the aggressive powerhouse to perfect 6-0 records. Two-time Pro Tour champion Tommi Hovi went undefeated in Standard with Go-Mar, and Joost Vollebregt also did not lose a match with his red-black Machine Head deck.

The Rochester Draft day of Worlds was probably more chaotic than in years past due to the multicolored nature of *Invasion* Block Limited. Previous years may have seen competitors sticking to two colors and being friendly to their neighbors, but *Invasion* block is an entirely different matter. Because it has so many powerful gold cards, *Invasion* block Draft encourages players to overlap the colors they play, which can result in neighbors fighting over colors. The really chaotic element involved is the *Apocalypse* pack, which changes the theme from allied colors to enemy colors. As a result, players are forced between the choice of a solid deck with a good mana base or a great deck with the potential for color problems. The common consensus among players seemed to be that blue was the best color to draft, and the "five-color green" strategy was also popular. The players who went undefeated in Rochester Draft were hometown Toronto hero Gab Tsang, Eugene Harvey, Christoph Lippert, and Brock Parker.

Even more exciting than the Standard day was the Extended portion of the event. Worlds was the first major tournament in almost two years to use Extended, a format that has gone through many changes since it was last used at a Pro Tour–level event. Necropotence, Survival of the Fittest, Replenish, and Demonic Consultation had all been banned, leaving the metagame a fresh canvas. The result was the emergence of the new metagame that contained decks such as "Cradle Elf," "Stompy," "White Weenie," "Stasis," "Sligh," "Oath," and monoblue "Donate-Illusions." The players who went undefeated in Extended were Alexander Witt with White Weenie, Daniel Zink with "Donate-Illusions," Franck Canu with "Cradle Elf," and Frederico Bastos with "Sligh."

After defeating Antonie Ruel in an exciting fifth game, Tom van de Logt found himself in the finals with nothing between him and the World Championship except for Alex Borteh's "Merfolk-Opposition" deck. This was a situation that had to make van de Logt happy, as his Machine Head deck had a huge advantage in the matchup against Borteh's Merfolk. With plenty of efficient targeted removal and a game-shifting spell in Plague Spitter, van de Logt was more than capable of keeping all of Borteh's creatures off the table to avoid being locked down. The matchup looked like a massacre on paper, and played out as one. Borteh knew he had very little chance to win and seemed to enjoy entertaining the crowd by laughing as his Merfolk headed to the discard pile one by one. The end result was that van de Logt won the match in a quick 3-0 sweep and went home $35,000 richer. Not only did van de Logt add significantly to his bank account, but he also walked away as the World Champion, the most coveted title in **Magic**.

World Champion Tom van de Logt

by Alex Shvartsman

Van de Logt began his Pro Tour career several years ago, when he competed at the 1998 World Championships in Seattle. Failing to place in the money there, van de Logt returned to the Pro Tour scene in 2000. His career looked promising after his first money finish—37th at Pro Tour–Los Angeles. He finished out of the money at Pro Tour–New York, but made up for it by breaking into the Top 8 of Grand Prix–Copenhagen. He also made the Dutch national team in 2000, qualifying for the World Championships in Brussels.

Worlds in Brussels was a very important tournament in van de Logt's career. He performed well in the Swiss rounds, which allowed him to break into the Top 8, where he lost his match against Benedikt Klauser. During the team competition, van de Logt helped the Netherlands place fourth.

When the Dutch National Championship rolled around again, for the second time in his career, van de Logt won the title, upsetting a slew of world-renowned competitors such as Noah Boeken, Cornelissen, and Ryan Fuller.

Van de Logt played a black-red "Machine Head" variant in the 2001 World Championships. This was a popular choice with Dutch players, who felt the deck would do very well against the field. This proved a good choice, as most of the Dutch players posted solid records on Day 1, with Joost Vollebregt being one of only four players to go undefeated. Van de Logt got his first loss in the fifth round against Belgium's Gert Coeckelbergh, who was one of four undefeated players with "Fires" decks. Van de Logt finished the day at a comfortable 5-1.

Tom van de Logt's Résumé

2001 Worlds:	1st
2001 Pro Tour–Barcelona:	44th
2000 Worlds:	5th
2000 Pro Tour–New York:	84th
2000 Pro Tour–Los Angeles:	37th
Dutch National Champion:	Twice
Grand Prix–Turin (team):	4th
Grand Prix–Copenhagen:	7th

Van de Logt got his revenge against Coeckelbergh on Day 2 during Rochester Draft. He won his first draft pod, defeating Day 1 leader Jan Tomcani. His second draft didn't go quite as well, as he went 1-2 and ended the day at 4-2. Another 4-2 or 5-1 finish would give van de Logt a good shot at the Top 8. It was now only a matter of choosing the right Extended deck.

Once again, the Dutch players were able to outperform the field. Van de Logt played a white weenie variant designed by Boeken and Fuller. The deck sported a minor Rebel engine (Ramosian Sergeants and Steadfast Guards), Soltari Priests, Mother of Runes, and Meddling Mage. This unorthodox build disregarded many staples, such as White Knight and Savannah Lions. Another innovation was playing enough dual lands to splash for sideboard cards such as Hydroblast and Perish.

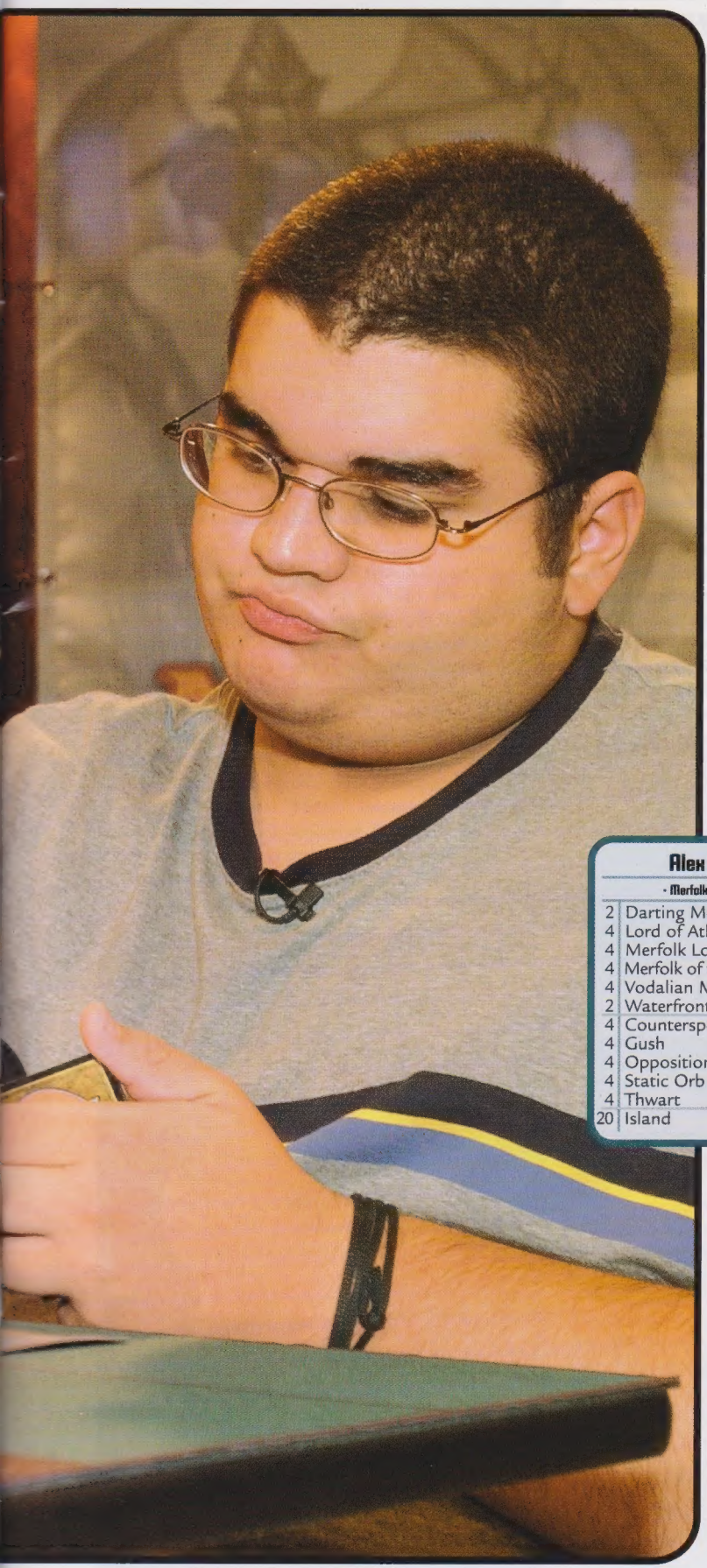
Tom van de Logt
- Machine Head -

4	Blazing Specter
2	Crypt Angel
2	Flametongue Kavu
3	Phyrexian Scuta
4	Plague Spitter
3	Skizzik
4	Dark Ritual
4	Duress
4	Terminate
3	Urza's Rage
3	Vendetta
6	Mountain
4	Rishadan Port
4	Sulfurous Springs
6	Swamp
4	Urborg Volcano

sideboard

3	Addle
1	Crypt Angel
1	Flametongue Kavu
3	Phyrexian Arena
2	Persecute
1	Pyroclasm
4	Scoria Cat

Van de Logt managed a 4-1 record, losing to Antoine Ruel for the second time. He was then able to intentionally draw with Alex Borteh to guarantee both of them a place in the Top 8. Van de Logt was in for a tough battle in the quarterfinals against Dave Williams's "Opposition" deck. The game record stood at 2-2 when judges interceded and, after a long investigation, issued a disqualification to Williams. Another tough match lay ahead: Antoine Ruel was the only player to have defeated van de Logt twice during the weekend. Yet van de Logt persevered, winning the match 3-2. After fighting tooth and nail to get that far, the final match was very heavily slanted in his favor: Plague Spitters and other cards in his deck provided a nightmare matchup for the Merfolk in Alex Borteh's deck. Sweeping his opponent 3-0, van de Logt became the new World Champion, repeating Jon Finkel's feat from last year of winning both his Nationals and the World Championships. Van de Logt has finally received the attention and fame he is due.



Finalist Alex Borteh

by Gary Wise

Pro Tour players are not always humble people. When you're good enough at a hobby to be paid thousands of dollars just to play, it's easy to get a swelled head. That Alex Borteh is the exception to this rule is what makes him such a breath of fresh air. "My friends have been acting like I'm a completely different person," says Borteh, whose status as a **Magic** player began a remarkable transformation starting at this year's U.S. Nationals. "But I'm still the same average **Magic** player I've always been."

The world may have been willing to believe Borteh's protests after U.S. Nationals. Previously, he'd been slaughtered at two Pro Tours and hasn't done much that has been noteworthy other than winning the 2001 Sideboard Team Challenge at **Origins**. When he made Top 8 at the toughest National Championship of the year, it was dismissed as a once-in-a-lifetime fluke. His great showing at Worlds has turned a lot of heads, and Borteh is having a hard time maintaining his "average player" reputation.

Borteh didn't just make Top 8 at World Championships, he did so in a dominating fashion. He started the tournament with a 4-0-2 record in the Standard portion of the tournament, playing a deck similar to the "Merfolk–Opposition" deck he used at U.S. Nationals. "I expected to see a lot of blue in the tournament, and the free counters and islandwalkers make the deck really strong against most blue decks, so it seemed like the right thing to play."

The second day didn't start so well for the 18-year-old Columbus, Ohio, resident, losing his first draft match to Andrea Santin of Italy (who would go on to the semifinals on Sunday). Before he could get upset about the loss, he won his next five matches. The loss to Santin would be the only one he would incur during the Swiss. "The drafts went really well for me," said Borteh, who credits former old-time pro players Jason Opalka and John Marks as his mentors. "My first deck was pretty solid, and the second may be the best I've ever drafted."

Going into Day 3 in second place, Borteh's main worry was what to play "I didn't actually have a deck ready, so Jess Means suggested I play "Three-Deuce," so I did." The aggressive creature deck worked like a charm, starting Borteh off 4-0, at which point his spot in the Top 8 was assured.

Alex Borteh

- Merfolk-Opposition -

2	Darting Merfolk
4	Lord of Atlantis
4	Merfolk Looter
4	Merfolk of the Pearl Trident
4	Vodalian Merchant
2	Waterfront Bouncer
4	Counterspell
4	Gush
4	Opposition
4	Static Orb
4	Thwart
20	Island

sideboard

3	Hibernation
3	Mana Maze
2	Misdirection
2	Prodigal Sorcerer
1	Rushing River
2	Teferi's Response
2	Wash Out

In the 17th round, Borteh was faced with a tough decision. Paired up with Mike Turian, a fellow Ohio Valley competitor who needed a win to make Top 8, Borteh had to decide whether or not to play. Finally, knowing Turian to be a nice guy who would hopefully do the same if the positions were reversed, Borteh gave the CMU Potato the match. With Borteh eventually missing the **Magic** Invitational by three DCI rating points, he said, "I have no regrets. If I won that match, I would have had a different first-round pairing and may have lost the quarterfinals." Said Turian, "I think it was a very humane act by a really good guy. I hope I can repay him some day." Borteh would draw his final round with Tom van de Logt before retiring for the day.

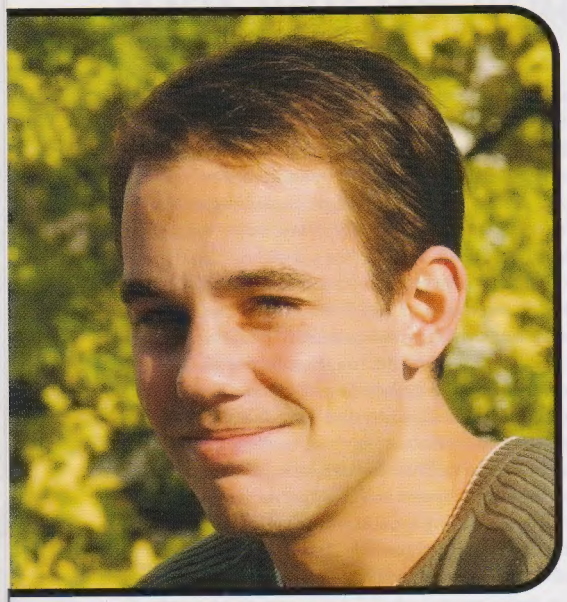
Things started well in the Top 8 for Borteh as he dispatched Jan Tomcani, the Standard day champion, and his "Fires" deck. Starting the match 2-0, things got a little too close for comfort for Alex before finally dispatching the "Slovak Surprise" in game 5 of the match. In the semifinals, he gained revenge on Andrea Santin for defeating him on Thursday, winning the near-mirror matchup in four games.

Heading into the final match 6-0-2 in Standard, Borteh was feeling pretty good, but it just was not to be. He lost to Tom van de Logt, 3-0, in a horrible matchup. "I never dreamed I'd do as well as I did, so I'm pretty happy with second place."

With 24 pro points to show for his efforts, Alex has decided to make a concentrated effort to get on the Masters. "I don't want to miss any time from school, but I'll be living with Jess Means and some other players, so I should stay pretty sharp. And being able to travel to play seems like a lot of fun." Regardless of whether he makes it, one thing's for certain: The humble streak that got him where he is now will keep him there in future.

Top 8 Profiles

by Gary Wise



Antoine Ruel

Throughout his Pro Tour career, Antoine Ruel hasn't been "Antoine"; he's been a "Ruel brother." Antoine, 21, and his younger brother Olivier burst onto the scene in early 2000 with a win at Grand Prix–Cannes, a victory that served as a precursor to their victory at the Team Draft Challenge. With two high finishes at Pro Tour team competitions, along with constant third Florent Jeudon, the rest, as they say, is history.

Despite his success at team competition, Antoine has not had the success at individual competition that his little brother has. Five times he's gone to individual-format Pro Tour events, and five times he's gone home empty-handed. And despite his success on the European Grand Prix circuit, he had to be getting a little frustrated with his inability to achieve a high finish on tour in a season for which he'd accumulated 39 pro points going into the World Championships. Now, all of that has changed.

Playing a black-blue-red control deck in Standard and, by sharp contrast, white weenie in Extended, Antoine finished first in the Swiss, finishing with 43 points and accumulating the second-highest opponent's match-win percentage in the tournament. Antoine tallied a 5-1 record in both Standard and Limited before going 4-1-1 in Extended with a final-round draw against Dave Williams. On Day 5, Antoine dispatched Tommi Hovi's "Go-Mar" deck before eventually succumbing to eventual Champion, Tom van de Logt.

With his newfound individual success come the spoils. More likely than not, Antoine will be on the Masters Series circuit for all of next season, and his performance earned him a spot at the **Magic** Invitational as the highest-ranked DCI member. Finally, this Ruel can stand on his own.

Mike Turian

For years, experts have been asking "who is the best player to never make a final day?" And more often than not, Mike Turian was the name they'd come up with. Time and again, Turian would come within a micrometer of attaining glory, with a 12th-place finish in Mainz, an 11th-place finish at 1998 Pro Tour–Chicago, and a number of other near misses.

That all changed a year ago at U.S. Nationals, when Turian failed to make the U.S. national team but played well enough to attain a spot in the Top 8. Once he'd gotten a taste of success, there would be no turning back. In this season's first Pro Tour event, Turian, playing with Scott Johns and Gary Wise on Team Potato Nation, won the Team Rochester Draft format that he seems to have made his own. But he still didn't have an individual-format Top 8 finish at a Pro Tour event. Now he does.

The strongest link between the old and new Team CMUs, the 21-year-old Turian has long been considered one of the world's best drafters. After starting Worlds 4-2 with "Red Guy Dead," a red beatdown deck in Standard, he again went 4-2 in Limited. Playing "Secret Force" in Extended, Turian went 4-0 before Alex Borteh, who was already in the Top 8, conceded to him. Turian then drew with John Ormerod (one of the benefits of being among the best-liked players on tour).

Unfortunately, in the end it was not to be: Turian lost an unfavorable quarterfinals matchup to Andrea Santin, but he has no regrets. Turian now has his Top 8 finish, so the pundits will simply have to find a new whipping boy.

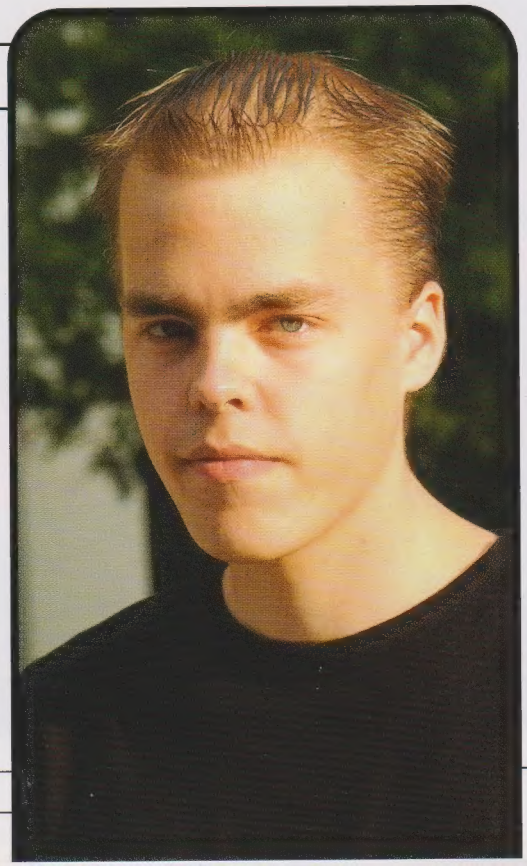
Tommi Hovi

If you were to start a **Magic** Hall of Fame, which five players would you induct first? There's Jon Finkel, obviously; Kai Budde with his three Pro Tour wins; Olle Råde, perhaps the most dominant Constructed player ever; Mike Long, the game's greatest villain; and, finally, the first player ever to win multiple Pro Tour events: Tommi Hovi.

Hovi's first Championship win came at the second Pro Tour–Los Angeles event, in 1997. His second win, in Rome, saw him pilot his famous "Academy" deck to victory. It should be no wonder then that a player whose game is so well balanced should succeed at Worlds. With this, his second Worlds Top 8, Hovi has become one of just six players to play twice on that most final of Sundays.

Hovi started the tournament with a bang, going 6-0 in Standard with a discard-filled Go-Mar deck. Hovi, 21, did most of his playtesting with Finnish players like Erno Ekebom, Tuomo Niemenen, and the like, so it should be no surprise that he settled on Go-Mar. This year in Tokyo, Hovi piloted a similar deck to a strong finish in his first Pro Tour event since 2000 Worlds, where, as in Tokyo, he finished in 19th place.

After a disappointing 3-3 performance in Limited, Hovi managed to go 4-2 in Extended to squeak into eighth place, just percentage points ahead of John Ormerod. Once there, however, the publicly shy Finn, who is apparently a lot more talkative in his native land, came to the end of his Standard rope, losing a close five-game match to Antoine Ruel. With two Pro Tour Championships, four Top 16s, and six Top 32s over the course of his career, it seems pretty obvious that he'll have other opportunities to capture that elusive third Championship.



Andrea Santin

Of those players fortunate enough to make the Top 8 at World Championships, Andrea Santin may be the most obscure. Long one of Italy's best players, Santin just hasn't been able to break through the Pro Tour Qualifier circuit enough times to become a Pro Tour regular, always returning to the Italian tournaments from which he came.

Santin, whose best performance on tour came in 1999 when he placed 23rd as a hometown favorite in Rome, proved his worth this year with his semifinal showing at Worlds, but along the way he showed the value of perseverance and, more importantly, loyalty. Paired against countryman Antonio de Rosa in the final round of the Swiss, Santin found himself the beneficiary of a good friend. De Rosa, knowing he couldn't make the Top 8, conceded to his friend Santin in the hopes that Santin would be able to play on Day 5. An hour later, his hopes were fulfilled.

Santin, playing an "Orbosition" deck, started the tourney 4-1-1 before a strong effort on Day 2 left him with 28 points after the Limited portion. Santin then went 3-1-1 in the first five rounds of Extended before being paired up against de Rosa. The resulting concession left Santin in third place after the Swiss.

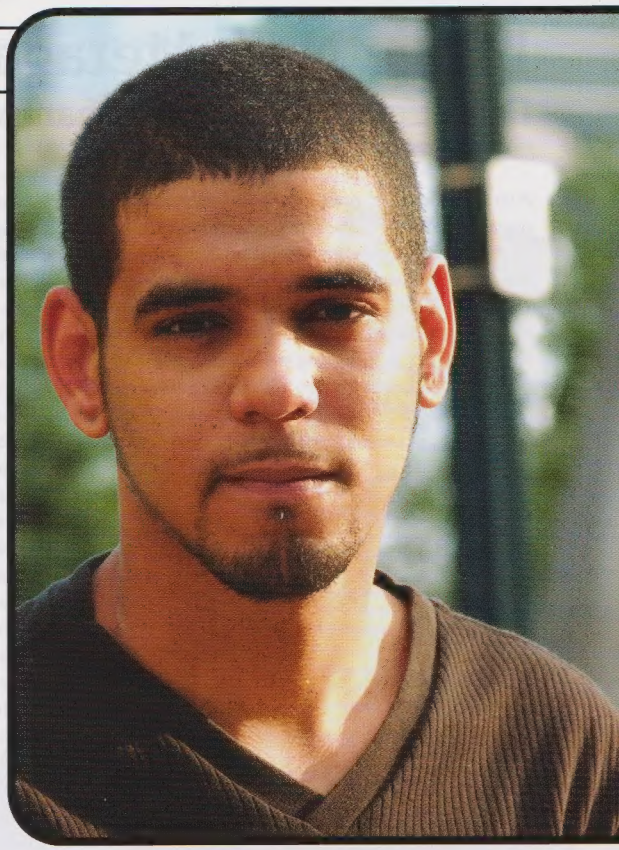
In the Top 8, Santin surprised critics by dispatching the more experienced Mike Turian before succumbing to Alex Borteh in a semifinals mirror match. Now, qualified for Pro Tour–New Orleans and with 18 pro points in 2001, Santin is assured for the first time of qualifying for a Pro Tour event via the threshold system. Look for Santin to leave obscurity behind: He's a pro now.

Dave Williams

For Dave Williams, success has been a long time coming. Williams has been around the Pro Tour for a while, starting out in 1998 with a string of abysmal failures that saw him finish no higher than 243rd. Some people would have quit, but for Williams, there was still the quest for respect.

Now, three years later, Williams seems to have accomplished all of those goals of long ago. First, at Grand Prix–San Diego he finished third losing only to William Jensen the whole tournament Next at Pro Tour–Chicago Masters he made Top 8. He also made the Top 8 at Pro Tour–Tokyo, where he was the only Top 8 player sporting black-red. Now he's made it to the **Magic** game's biggest stage: Worlds.

Williams chose to play a Saproling–Oposition deck in Standard and went just 3-3. He rebounded with a strong 5-1 showing in his best format—Limited—before finishing with a 4-1-1 record in Extended where he played a blue-green "Tradewind-Oppostion" deck, which was good enough for fifth place at the end of the Swiss.



Jan Tomcani

Jan Tomcani made his Pro Tour debut at Rome and was promptly crushed by the Pro Tour's finest. He went back home to Slovakia and worked on his game, and when he was again ready to qualify for the Pro Tour, there was no looking back.

Qualifying for Pro Tour–Tokyo, Tomcani played well enough to place 27th, with a final-round loss costing him a Top 16 finish. Proving Tokyo was no fluke, Tomcani next traveled to Barcelona where a final-round loss to Patrick Mello left him in ninth place. Now, with Worlds as his third Pro Tour event since his "comeback," Tomcani's cracked the Top 8 barrier and the sky appears to be the limit.

Tomcani started out the tournament better than anyone, piloting his "Fires" deck to a 6-0 record and the Standard day title. He then went 4-2 in Limited, which put him in second place before a 3-3 finish in Extended left him in seventh after the swiss. Once in the Top 8, like fellow Standard 6-0 finisher Tommi Hovi, Tomcani failed to continue that success, losing to American Alex Borteh in five games.

Now, with a spot on the gravy train secured, big things are expected of the "Slovak Surprise." If he keeps finishing the way he has, people may even start calling him the "East Block Kamiel." Regardless of what you call him, one thing's for certain: The kid is for real and the Pro Tour better know it.

Brave New Metagame

Extended at the World Championships

by Alex Shvartsman

A tremendous card pool, broken or at least overpowered strategies, semiregular major changes to the format—Extended has got what it takes to be the most challenging format for a deck builder. Although no one knew how the Extended metagame at Worlds would turn out, everyone had an opinion. "There is going to be a sea of Oath," said some players. "Combo isn't dead. 'Illusions-Donate' will continue to dominate even without black," argued others. "No one will test very much, so most players will opt for simple, yet effective decks like 'Sligh' and 'Stompy,'" claimed others. Although there was some truth to all of these statements, in the end everyone was pleasantly surprised. After six rounds of play at Worlds, it was clear that there was no overpowered deck, yet almost every serious deck in the format was quite viable. A total of four players managed perfect 6-0 records at the end of the day, and they each played different archetypes.

Zvi Mowshowitz
- Turbo Land -

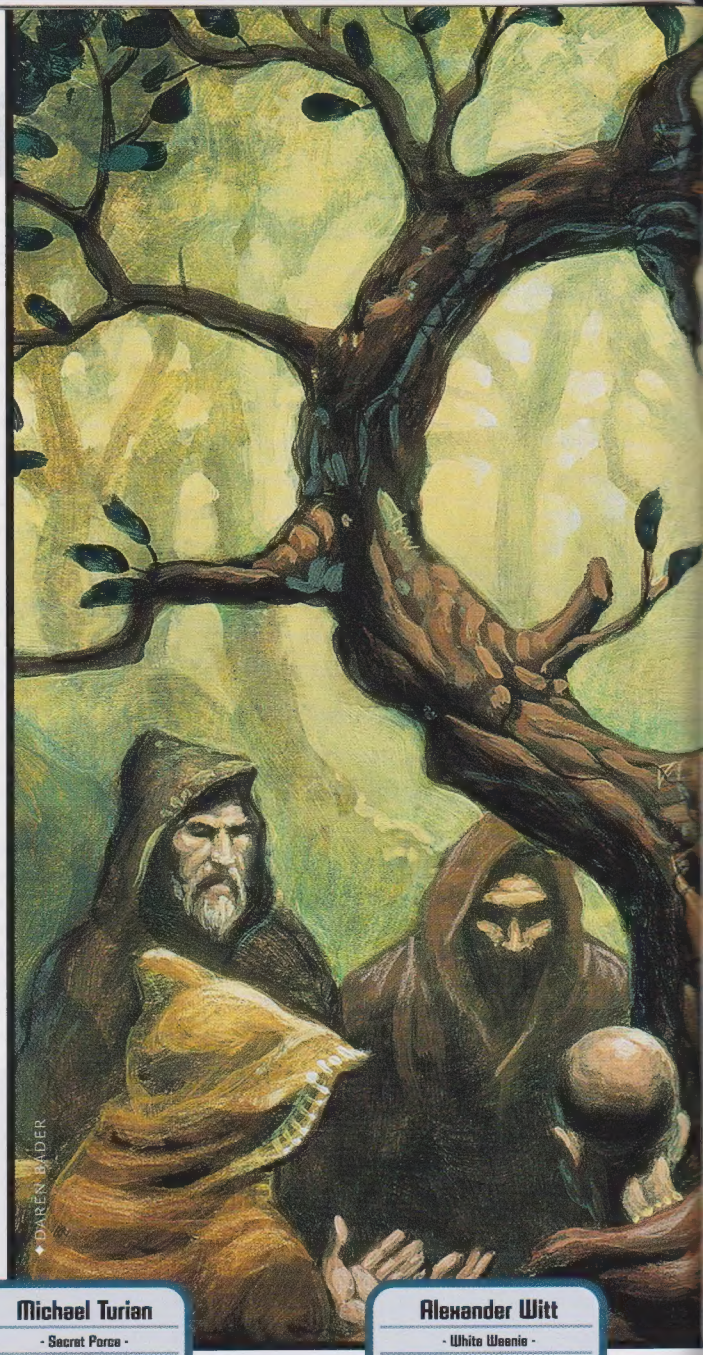
1	Morphling
1	Spike Feeder
1	Spike Weaver
3	Counterspell
4	Exploration
4	Force of Will
2	Gaea's Blessing
4	Gush
4	Horn of Greed
4	Impulse
4	Oath of Druids
2	Scroll Rack
1	Thwart
2	Time Warp
6	Forest
12	Island
1	Treetop Village
4	Tropical Island

sideboard

4	Emerald Charm
1	Morphling
3	Powder Keg
2	Spike Feeder
3	Spike Weaver
2	Thwart

If a single deck must be chosen as the most successful deck of the tournament, it would probably have to be the Dutch version of white weenie as designed by Noah Boeken and Ryan Fuller. Most of the players who used this deck managed 5-1 records, with no one doing worse than 4-2. Alexander Witt was one of the four undefeated players. The concept of white weenie in Extended is as old as the format itself, but the Dutch proved they could innovate without falling prey to established patterns. Unlike a standard white weenie deck, or "PT Jank" as the deck is often described, Witt's creature roster was replaced almost completely. Gone were the many creatures with shadow, the White Knights, and Warriors *en*-Kor. In their places were a small Rebel engine (Ramosian Sergeants and Steadfast Guards), Mother of Runes, and Meddling Mages. The only creature to survive the alteration was Soltari Priest.

The deck's major strength was its versatility. Whereas white weenie is somewhat weak against "Stasis" and "Forbidian," the Rebel chain helped win those matchups. Steadfast Guards were a nightmare for Stasis, to be sure. Weak matchups for this deck included Stompy and "Secret Force." Adding three Perishes to the sideboard solved the problem. The deck ran Tithe and Flood Planes, so finding the Scrubland (or a Tundra for the sideboarded Hydroblast) wasn't difficult at all. And Brainstorms allowed for better library manipulation, especially combined with so many cards that allow players to reshuffle their decks.



Michael Turian
- Secret Force -

4	Elvish Lyrist
4	Fyndhorn Elves
4	Llanowar Elves
3	Masticore
4	Spike Feeder
3	Spike Weaver
3	Uktabi Orangutan
2	Verdant Force
4	Wall of Roots
2	Creeping Mold
4	Natural Order
2	Dust Bowl
14	Forest
3	Gaea's Cradle
4	Wasteland

sideboard

3	Choke
4	Emerald Charm
1	Masticore
1	Penumbra Wurm
4	Powder Keg
1	Spike Weaver
1	Uktabi Orangutan

Alexander Witt
- White Weenie -

4	Meddling Mage
4	Mother of Runes
4	Ramosian Sergeant
4	Soltari Priest
4	Steadfast Guard
4	Brainstorm
2	Crusade
4	Cursed Scroll
4	Seal of Cleansing
4	Swords to Plowshares
4	Tithe
4	Flood Plain
8	Plains
2	Scrubland
4	Tundra

sideboard

4	Bottle Gnomes
3	Disenchant
3	Erase
2	Hydroblast
3	Perish

Frederico Bastos, another undefeated player, used a Sligh deck. If white weenie redesigned by the Dutch could hardly be recognized, Sligh changed very little from the versions we all know and love. Bastos's alterations to the deck included playing four Rishadan Ports instead of Ghitu Encampments, and maindecking Urza's Rage rather than Hammer of Bogardan. Playing Goblin Cadets seemed like a poor metagame call, but it clearly worked out for Bastos.

German National Champion Daniel Zink managed to go undefeated with an Illusions-Donate deck. This monoblue version relied on Merchant Scrolls and a ton of inexpensive library manipulation (Accumulated Knowledge and Brainstorm) to find the pieces of the combo. Not nearly as powerful as the version fueled by Necropotence, Zink's deck was clearly still viable—especially because many players weren't prepared for the matchup, having written off the archetype

Daniel Zink
- Illusions-Donate -

4	Accumulated Knowledge
4	Brainstorm
3	Counterspell
4	Donate
4	Force of Will
4	Illusions of Grandeur
4	Intuition
1	Mana Short
4	Merchant Scroll
1	Rushing River
4	Sapphire Medallion
1	Thwart
22	Island

sideboard

4	Gainsay
2	Hibernation
3	Hydroblast
4	Ophidian
1	Rushing River
1	Stroke of Genius

Jon Finkel
- Turbo-Phid -

3	Masticore
4	Ophidian
4	Thieving Magpie
3	Boomerang
3	Counterspell
4	Force of Will
2	Force Spike
4	Misdirection
4	Powder Keg
2	Rushing River
3	Veiled Serpent
4	Ancient Tomb
3	City of Traitors
17	Island

sideboard

4	Annul
3	Back to Basics
4	Hydroblast
4	Submerge

once Necropotence got banned. Zink was not the only player nostalgic for a lost archetype, however. Members of Team Your Move Games played graveyard-manipulation decks based on Oath of Ghouls rather than Survival of the Fittest. Titled "Tomb Raider," the decks were not incredibly successful, but they were fun to watch.

Franck Canu went undefeated with an archetype that few expected to show up in numbers: Secret Force. As of two days prior to the tournament, no one expected more than perhaps five people to be sporting Natural Orders at Worlds, yet it seemed that many players opted to play the deck at the eleventh hour. The result? Something like twenty Secret Force decks running rampant through the tournament. The deck crushes other creature strategies and holds its own against control; its worst current matchup is against Oath. The deck used to lose badly to combo strategies, but because there were very few combo decks around, monogreen thrived.

A number of players used very exciting rogue strategies. Zvi Mowshowitz, forever in love with his "Turbo Land" deck, openly admitted months before Worlds that he would play the deck. He stayed true to his word, achieving an impressive 5-0-1 record with it. Brian Kibler, out of contention for the Top 8, chose to play a fun deck. He used a Secret Force variant that splashed white for Rith, the Awakener and Armadillo Cloak—going a long way in an effort to relive his Pro Tour–Chicago experience.

To me, one of the most exciting decks at the tournament was the one played by Jon Finkel. He played "Turbo-Phid"—a monoblue deck with Ancient Tombs and Cities of Traitors for acceleration that used four Ophidians and four Thieving Magpies as its win conditions, and was backed up with a ton of countermagic and some Boomerangs. One of the most unorthodox cards in the deck was Veiled Serpent. In retrospect, it was an excellent choice: Every deck in the format either ran islands or attacked with creatures—and a 4/4 for three mana is good in either of those cases, and it cycles if nothing else.

Terry Tsang played another really cool deck. He played "Godzilla," which is a reanimator deck with giant creatures, Necromancy, and Animate Dead. A number of other interesting rogue decks were present. Adrian Sullivan, one of the few players to use several *Apocalypse* cards in the format, played a blue-black-green deck built around Pernicious Deed. Adrian Sayers splashed red in his Forbidian deck for Squee, Goblin Nabob; Shard Phoenix; and Pyroclasm. Trey van Cleave revisited "Counter-Sliver," with main-deck Meddling Mage and Daze. Ben Seck opted to play Pox with Nether Spirits. Dan Clegg and David Williams each played blue-green "Opposition" decks.

Some of the top pros went with old favorites. Bob Maher used his signature Oath deck, with main-deck Crater Hellion instead of Spike Weaver. Ben Rubin opted for a Stompy deck, but was not successful with it. Raphael Levy was among the Secret Force supporters—Jamie Wakefield would be proud to know that Levy played Overrun in addition to Coat of Arms.

If this event is any indication, the upcoming Extended Pro Tour in New Orleans should be truly exciting. The *Odyssey* set will become legal in time for that event, undoubtedly throwing even more viable archetypes into the mix.

Remove target creature from the game. Its controller gains life equal to its power.
You may pay 1 life and remove a blue card in your hand from the game instead of paying Force of Will's casting cost. Effects that prevent or redirect damage cannot be used to counter this loss of life.
Counter target spell.
Add one colorless mana to your mana pool.
, Sacrifice Wasteland: Destroy target nonbasic land.
"The land promises nothing and keeps its promise."
—Oracle en-Vec

Worlds Team Recap

U.S. Team Rebounds from Slow Start

by Gary Wise

If there's a lesson to be learned from the team competition at this year's World Championships, it's that in the **Magic** game, you should never say die. After the first day of competition, the U.S. and Norwegian national teams stood 43rd and 40th respectively at the World Championships, with each three-person team having compiled a 6-12 record. By the end of the tournament, they were ranked first and second, respectively.

The buzz around this year's team competition started almost two months earlier at U.S. Nationals. History confirms that the Americans have always been the favorites in the competition, winning every World Championships but the one in 1997. Each year, the world waits with bated breath to see which of the American cream will rise to the top—and if they'll be beatable. When Trevor Blackwell, Brian Hegstad, and Eugene Harvey were announced as the members of the 2001 U.S. national team, it was obvious that the world thought their union was among the weakest the United States had ever fielded.

As the teams of the world continued coming together, there was no clear favorite. The Americans, the Austrians, and the French were led by big name stars like Trevor Blackwell, Benedikt Klauser, and Olivier Ruel, respectively. The Norwegians, Dutch, and Canadians had solid teams that many thought could challenge for the title. Before Day 1, everyone knew that this year's Worlds was a good chance for another country to wrestle the title from the Americans. Then, on Day 1, those chances improved.

— Day 1 —

Disaster struck for the U.S. almost immediately, with Trevor Blackwell at the center of those difficulties. The reigning U.S. Champion and former Pro Tour winner finished Day 1 dead last with a 0-6 and had the second-worst tiebreaker of the day. His lieutenants didn't fare much better, with both Hegstad and Harvey finishing the day with disappointing 3-3 records.

Things were going just as badly in the Norwegian camp. Former European Champion Nicolai Herzog went just 2-4. Thanks in part to an incorrectly filled out decklist that saw his "Machine Head" deck's Rishadan Ports turn to swamps. The team's other "anchor," Øyvind Ødegaard did even worse, compiling a 1-5 record. Meanwhile, Jan Peter Groenhof, their reputed Limited specialist, was carrying the team with a 3-3 record. All was not well.

At the top of the standings, five teams were battling for first place: the Japanese at 13-5, the Australians at 12-5-1, and the Dutch, led by eventual Champ Tom van de Logt, at 5-1 were in a three-way tie with the surprising Brazilian and Czech squads at 12-6. Unfortunately, those two upstarts would see their hopes and dreams dashed on Thursday.

— Day 2 —

Some players feel that the Limited portion of Worlds separates the wheat from the chaff. If that's true, the eventual finalists proved their worth and then some. Day 2 saw the Americans stage one of the greatest comebacks in team-competition history, vaulting themselves from 43rd place to a tie for third with Denmark. How is this possible? Simple: Don't lose.

The Americans went an astounding 16-2 in the Limited portion with one of their losses, by Hegstad, coming at the hands of Harvey. With Harvey going 6-0 and the others both 5-1, the U.S. national team suddenly sat just 6 points behind Japan for first place. The Japanese, going 11-7 on Day 2, were showing remarkable consistency, while the Dutch, who also went 11-7, were in second.

While not in as drastic a fashion as the Americans, the Norwegians were definitely making headway on Day 2. Groenhof verified his status as a Limited specialist, going 5-1 and leaving him in contention for a berth in the Top 8. His two more-experienced teammates reversed their Day 1 fortunes, with Herzog's 4-2 record bested by Ødegaard's 5-1 finish. This left the Norwegians in eighth place, with the teams from Greece, Sweden, and Australia between them and the Top 4.

U.S. National Team: Harvey, Hegstead, Blackwell

— Day 3 —

By the end of Day 3, the United States had completed its comeback, finishing the day in second place, but by this time, the story of the tournament looked to be the Dutch. With strong finishes on Days 1 and 2, when other teams faltered at one bad format, the Dutch team, made up of Tom van de Logt, Frank Karsten, and Jeroen Remie, showed its consistency by posting a 12-5-1 record in Extended to end the Swiss. Remie easily had the worst tournament of the trio, but finished with a respectable 10-8 record. Karsten, who finished 17th in Belgium, nearly matched his strong finish there by placing 20th this time around, while van de Logt finished the Swiss with 40 points, leading all national team members.

Finishing the day four full matches behind the Dutch, the Americans still had to be happy with second place. Harvey's final-round draw left him in 13th place, while Hegstad and Blackwell combined to go 19-17. In a competition in which one teammate can drag his or her teammates down, the consistent finishes of the

Americans were extremely important and equally impressive, considering the mental strain involved with coming back from their horrendous start.

Right on the American's heels was Japan, the leaders of Day 2 who, with a total of 93 points, couldn't be too pleased with their 7-11 Extended performance. Two points behind the U.S. was Belgium at 92, followed by Sweden at 90, and four teams at 88.

Amazingly, Norway actually lost ground on Day 3. After a strong performance in the Limited portion of the tournament, the Norwegians had a disappointing Friday, with Groenhof and Herzog each going 3-3, while Ødegaard's troubles continued with a 2-4 record. Fortunately for him and his teammates, the team competition rewards excellence in Limited play more than Constructed. In other words, the Norwegians knew that while they entered the day just 10 points out of second place, the points doubled for the Team Rochester portion of the tournament on Day 4. Their chances of reaching the finals remained intact.

— Day 4 —

As has been the case in the past, the first three days of the tournament were only a precursor to Day 4, when all past mistakes could be corrected with one strong showing. This year's competition differed from those of the past in that previously the deciding format was Team Sealed; now it was Team Rochester that would decide the finalists. This proved to be highly advantageous to those teams with players who had excelled in that format in the past.

The three most notable Team Rochester drafters in the event going into the day were France's Olivier Ruel of Team Black Ops; Nicolai Herzog, whose Team Outland finished fifth at 2000 Pro Tour–New York; and Eugene Harvey, who plays constantly with Mike Turian and Car Acrobatic Team. The experience these three brought to their respective teams proved invaluable as the day wore on.

The tone of the day was set in round 19, when Trevor Blackwell defeated van de Logt and the Dutch, cutting the point differential between the two teams in half. While the Americans would add 100 points to their total—leaving them in first place when the day was done—the Dutch had an abysmal time of it, mustering only 72 points, leaving them in sixth place and out of the money at tournament's end.

The Norwegian resurgence was on. First, they defeated the Germans 2-1. Then, after a surprising 2-1 loss to New Zealand, they swept the Belgians, then the Australians. Going into the last round, a number of teams, such as third-place Sweden and fourth-place Canada, needed to sweep in order to have a chance at catching first-place France or the second-place Americans. But when the smoke cleared, the U.S. national team had defeated France 2-1, which allowed the Norwegians to sneak into second place. Finland came from out of nowhere to finish third and Sweden finished fourth, with the French and Dutch, both of whom had been in first in the previous twenty-four hours, left in fourth- and fifth-place, respectively. That set up the final between two squads that had been left for dead after Day 1.

— Day 5 —

With both teams having done so poorly in the Standard portion, a comedy of errors was expected heading into Sunday's final. The champions pairing saw the two most experienced players in the contest, Blackwell and Herzog, face off while Hegstad faced Ødegaard and Harvey took on Groenhof.

Harvey and Groenhof, each the least experienced members of their squads, faced off in a match pitting two aggressive decks against one another. Harvey played "Fires," and Groenhof played a slightly more aggressive, more original red-green deck, with cards like Stone Rain and Veteran Brawlers pushing the tempo a bit. Despite taking a mulligan, Groenhof managed to pull out game 1. When he played the Brawlers in conjunction with some land destruction before Harvey could muster enough mana to play his threats, CMU's American hero was forced to concede.

In the match pitting champions against one another, things started slowly for both Blackwell's "Fires" deck and Herzog's still-Portless Machine Head deck. Game 1 saw Blackwell win almost solely on card advantage, with Flametongue Kavu destroying a Ritualed Crypt Angel after Thunderscape Battlemage's black kicker had been played. Game 2 was a different story, with Persecute from Herzog removing two Blastoderms and a Spiritmonger from Blackwell's hand, giving the 1999 Worlds Top 8 finisher time to get rolling. But game 3 reverted back to the matchup's natural form: Machine Head has seen little play all year because of its weakness against green fatties, and despite Herzog getting some successful discard in, the combination of Blackwell's Fires of Yavimaya, Spiritmonger, and Blastoderm finished him off.

In the tiebreaker, it was tense until the end. Game 1 saw Hegstad, starting with six cards, get deck's Orbosition lock down when he was at 1 life. Again starting with six cards in game 2, Hegstad could only stare in disbelief at his deck as it produced one useless island after another. With the Championship on the line, game 3 saw Hegstad yell praise to the gods as he kept his opening hand, and when Ødegaard's Fires deck failed to play a 1-mana creature on turn 1, Hegstad knew the game was his to win. He got down Static Orb, then Jungle Barrier, then Opposition, and when Ødegaard tried to play a double-kicked Thornscape Battlemage, the American had Thwart waiting in hand, prompting the Norwegian, and the world, to concede. The Americans each took home $10,000, leaving the world to wonder if they could be beaten in 2002.

Norway National Team: Ødegaard, Herzog, Groenhof

Final Standings

Rank	Name	Prize	Pro Points
1	Tom van de Logt	$35,000	32
2	Alex Borteh	$23,000	24
	Antoine Ruel	$15,000	16
	Andrea Santin	$13,000	16
	Michael Turian	$9,500	12
	Jan Tomcani	$8,500	12
	Tommi Hovi	$7,500	12
	John Ormerod	$6,500	12
	Katsuhiro Mori	$6,000	8
	Djinn Okamoto	$5,500	8
	Roger Sorino	$5,000	8
	Eugene Harvey	$4,500	8
	Franck Canu	$4,100	8
	Zvi Mowshowitz	$3,800	8
	Brian Selden	$3,500	8
	Justin Gary	$3,250	8
	Jon Finkel	$3,000	7
	Gert Coeckelbergh	$2,750	7
	Frank Karsten	$2,550	7
	Luis Sousa	$2,400	7
	Ben Rubin	$2,250	7
	Wessel Oomens	$2,100	7
	Brock Parker	$2,000	7
	Bob Maher Jr.	$1,900	7
	Kamiel Cornelissen	$1,800	6
	Antonino de Rosa	$1,700	6
	Pierre Malherbaud	$1,600	6
	Antti Puurula	$1,500	6
	Eisaku Itadani	$1,400	6
	Patrick Mello	$1,350	6
	Chris Benafel	$1,300	6
	Gabriel Tsang	$1,250	6
	Joost Vollebregt	$1,200	5
	Robert Dougherty	$1,150	5
	Ming Huang Royce Chai	$1,100	5
	Yujian Zhou	$1,050	5
	Daniel Zink	$1,000	5
	Trey Van Cleave	$950	5
	Dave Montreuil	$900	5
	David Humpherys	$875	5
	Dani do Carmo	$850	5
	Alan Comer	$825	5
	Neil Reeves	$800	5
	Kai Budde	$775	5
	Daniel Bertelesen Smits	$750	5
	Antonin Weber	$730	5
	Markus Joebstl	$710	5
	David Jafari	$690	4
	Goro Matsuo	$675	4
	Benedikt Klauser	$660	4
	Andre Delere	$645	4
	Masaya Mori	$630	4
	Jan Pieter Groenhof	$615	4
	Steven OMS	$600	4
	Scott Johns	$590	4
	William Jensen	$580	4
	Richard Edbury	$570	4
	Svend Geertsen	$560	4
	Tsuyoshi Fujita	$550	4
	Philip Reich	$540	4
	Mark Globus	$530	4
	Jussi Perälä	$520	4
	Johan Johanneson	$510	4
	Abraham Snepvangers	$500	4
	Johnson Wan		3
	Brian Davis		3
	Poya Nobari		3
	Zsolt Tokoli		3
	Scott Richards		3
	Darwin Kastle		3
	Chien-Ming Jen		3
	Ferran Vila		3
	Frederico Bastos		3
	Andrew Johnson		3
75	Dimitris Apergis		3
76	Ziga Skrbec		3
77	Eivind Nitter		3
78	Sam Lount		3
79	Christian Lührs		3
80	Dimitrios Kopsidas		3
81	Tomas Rosholm		3
82	Niels Jensen		3
83	David Brucker		3
84	Danny Mandel		3
85	Jakob Tomse		3
86	Terry Tsang		3
87	Brian Hegstad		3
88	Daniel Bethencourt		3
89	Sébastien Gyger		3
90	Nicolas Labarre		3
91	Sturla Bingen		3
92	Christoph Lippert		3
93	Jason Mountney		3
94	Gary Wise		3
95	Eduardo Sella		3
96	Kyle Rose		3
97	Juan Sebastian Suter Gandara		3
98	Promoz Lavs		3
99	Helmut Summersberger		3
100	Brian Kibler		3
101	Jeroen Remie		3
102	Christiano Pereira		3
103	Alexander Witt		3
104	Paniotis Zacharias		3
105	Andrew Gordon		3
106	David Price		3
107	Sol Malka		3
108	Arelius Areliusarson		3
109	Michael Durham		3
110	Aaron Forsythe		3
111	Peter Gysemans		3
112	George Kapalas		3
113	Laurent Pagorek		3
114	Sam Lie Kang Lau		3
115	Wei Ren Khoo		3
116	Yann Hamon		3
117	Jeff Cunningham		3
118	Daniel Clegg		3
119	Petr Nahodil		3
120	Jimmy Oman		3
121	Wai-Sing (Jimmy) Chung		3
122	Masahiko Morita		3
123	Bjørn Jocumsen		3
124	Ken Ho		3
125	Wolfgang Eder		3
126	Oliver Schneider		3
127	Peter Leiher		3
128	Diego Ostrovich		3
129	Liang Zhang		2
130	Daniel Vicente		2
131	Adrian Sayers		2
132	Donald Gallitz		2
133	Adrian Sullivan		2
134	Noah Boeken		2
135	Evzen Boura		2
136	Michael Pustilnik		2
137	Jelger Wiegersma		2
138	Jack Ho		2
139	Thomas Qvist		2
140	Mike Wall		2
141	Emiliano Onorati		2
142	Robert McKeon		2
143	Maxime Reichman		2
144	Alexis Dumay		2
145	Matthew Hay		2
146	Jerome Vilm		2
147	Francisco Barboza		2
148	Rudy Widjaja		2
149	Victor Cabrera Martinez		2
150	Daniel OMS		2
151	Messaud Bouchaib		2
152	Ayal Hassidim		2
153	Nicolai Herzog		2
154	Trevor Blackwell		2
155	Sinan Bolca		2
156	Jun Nobushita		2
157	Jason Neale		2
158	Chad Ellis		2
159	Stephan Valkyser		2
160	Roger Miller		2
161	Tam Wing Lok		2
162	Rob Nadebaum		2
163	Jan Sorensen		2
164	Ben Ronaldson		2
165	David Bachmann		2
166	Johan Verhulst		2
167	Jamie Parke		2
168	Matthew Vienneau		2
169	Wang Zhi Chen		2
170	Michael Gurney		2
171	Lázár Szabo		2
172	Darryl Tweedale		2
173	Olivier Ruel		2
174	Jason Opalka		2
175	Mark Ziegner		2
176	Toshiharu Niwa		2
177	Tzu-Ching Kuo		2
178	Wielfried Ranque		2
179	Elijah Pollock		2
180	Craig Jones		2
181	Daniel Mokka		2
182	Eduardo Muñoz		2
183	Nicolas Olivieri		2
184	Vlad Gheorghiu		2
185	Andres Pablo Camargo Alfaro		2
186	Charles Delvaux		2
187	Lawrence Sy		2
188	Øyvind Ødegaard		2
189	Matt Linde		2
190	Edward Ross		2
191	Helder Coelho		2
192	Staffan Enberg		2
193	Massimo Guarino		2
194	Michel Cumsille		2
195	Matias Bollatti		2
196	Boris Zlotoiabko		2
197	Yngvi Omar Sighvatsson		2
198	Alex Shvartsman		2
199	Tomi Walamies		2
200	Stefan Fridriksson		2
201	Jose Barbero		2
202	Carlos Mao		2
203	Victor Galimbertti		2
204	Kerel Laycock		2
205	Mongkol Tachasukjai		2
206	Andreas Budi Pranoto		2
207	James White		2
208	James Davis		2
209	Alex Cernahoschi		2
210	Eyal Leshem		2
211	Ben Seck		2
212	Xiao Wang		2
213	Steve Gerson		2
214	Bryan Hubble		2
215	Daniele Canavesi		2
216	Lawrence Creech		2
217	Joe Weber		2
218	Carlos Medina Lopez		2
219	Marcos Teruo Tanaka		2
220	Weng Kwong Au Yeong		2
221	Thomas Felsberg		2
222	Andrej Renko		
223	Chen Yu Weng		2
224	Jansen Angkasa		2
225	Mark Marsden		2
226	Andrew Nishioka		2
227	Janosch Kühn		2
228	Khai Wen Leong		2
229	Ilja Ambo		2
230	Jorge Padilla		2
231	Matteo di Tomaso		2
232	Danny Yosef		2
233	Damian Brown-Santirso		2
234	Martin Polak		2
235	Andrew Plinston		2
236	Daniel Casnji		2
237	Igor Frayman		2
238	Sepp Neff		2
239	Norrasuk Jumsai Na Ayutthaya		2
240	Erno Ekebom		2
241	Morgan Ramanchandram		2
242	Prapon Maneechareonwong		2
243	Tobey Tamber		2
244	Yu Kwong Cheung		2
245	Michael Fisher		2
246	Dinis Maia		2
247	Pawel Karaszewski		2
248	Thomas Guevin		2
249	Mattias Jorstedt		2
250	Cormac Smyth		2
251	David Coghlan		2
252	Masayuki Higashino		2
253	Leonardo Uzcategui		2
254	John Hunka		2
255	Jordan Gallant		2
256	Andrey Gubachev		2
257	Manchester Sy		2
258	Giorgios Theodolun		2
259	Michal Jedlicka		2
260	Steve Hatto		2
261	Walter Leonardo Witt Palacios		2
262	Juan Eduardo Escobar Reyes		2
263	Krzysztof Domaszewski		2
264	Jorge Melgar		2
265	Siong Huat Soh		2
266	Raphael Levy		2
267	Benny Wong		2
268	Reinhard Hoelzel		2
269	Eduardo Albareda		2
270	Cyrille de Foucaud		2
271	Gero Maier		2
272	Andrea Paselli		2
273	Chung Wing Tat		2
274	Artem Kozachuk		2
275	Russel Mirara		2
276	Ray Pello		2
277	Jeff Kearns		2
278	Lucas Hager		2
279	Ryan Fuller		2
280	Dusan Kamenov		2
281	Jonny Chapman		2
282	Marcin Goral Horecki		2
283	Jun Yang Ang		2
284	Sigurd Eskeland		2
285	Thorir Thorgeirsson		2
286	Felix Schneiders		2
287	Tuomo Nieminen		2
288	Philip Brett		2
289	Russell Tanchel		2
290	Szymon Bialek		2
291	Jens Thoren		2
292	Guzmán Villanova		2
293	Jasar Elarar		2
294	Brad Swan		2
295	Alexander Westerley		2

Player of the Year Race

2001 Final Standings

Rank	Name	Home Country	Points
1	Kai Budde	Germany	88
2	Kamiel Cornelissen	Netherlands	75
3	Michael Pustilnik	USA	71
4	Chris Benafel	USA	65
5	Ryan Fuller	Netherlands	64
6	Zvi Mowshowitz	USA	64
7	Daniel Clegg	USA	59
8	Scott Johns	USA	59
9	Antoine Ruel	France	56
10	Michael Turian	USA	53
11	David Williams	USA	51
12	Robert Dougherty	USA	49
13	Jon Finkel	United States	48
14	Tsuyoshi Fujita	Japan	48
15	Gary Wise	Canada	48
16	Olivier Ruel	France	47
17	Noah Boeken	The Netherlands	44
18	Benedikt Klauser	Austria	42
19	Tom van de Logt	Netherlands	42
20	Patrick Mello	Germany	40
21	Brock Parker	USA	40
22	Alan Comer	USA	39
23	Abraham Snepvangers	The Netherlands	39
24	Bob Maher Jr.	USA	37
25	Darwin Kastle	USA	36
26	Franck Canu	France	35
27	Trey Van Cleave	Denmark	35
28	Justin Gary	USA	34
29	Nicolai Herzog	Norway	33
30	Matthew Vienneau	Canada	33
31	David Humpherys	USA	32
32	William Jensen	USA	31
33	Katsuhiro Mori	Japan	31
34	Eivind Nitter	Norway	31
35	Steven O'Mahoney-Schwartz	USA	31
36	Brian Kibler	USA	30
37	Alex Shvartsman	USA	30
38	Trevor Blackwell	USA	29
39	Erno Ekebom	Finland	29
40	John Ormerod	England	29
41	Ken Ho	USA	28
42	Lawrence Creech	USA	27
43	Kyle Rose	USA	27
44	Jens Thoren	Sweden	27
45	Jan Tomcani	Slovak Republic	27
46	Satoshi Nakamura	Japan	26
47	Tuomo Nieminen	Finland	26
48	Alex Borteh	USA	25
49	Aaron Forsythe	USA	25
50	Masayuki Higashino	Japan	25
51	Andrew Johnson	USA	25
52	Mattias Jorstedt	Sweden	25
53	Daniel O'Mahoney-Schwartz	USA	25
54	Brian Selden	USA	25

Rookie of the Year Race

2001 Final Standings

Rank	Name	Home Country	Points
1	Katsuhiro Mori	Japan	31
2	Ken Ho	USA	28
3	Lawrence Creech	USA	27
4	Markus Joebstl	Austria	24
5	Brian Hegstad	USA	23
6	Danny Mandel	USA	21
7	Johan Sadeghpour	Sweden	18
8	Dustin Stern	USA	15
9	Andre Delere	Germany	14
9	Eugene Harvey	USA	14
9	Tomohiro Maruyama	Japan	14
12	Jan Doise	Belgium	12
12	Luis Sousa	Portugal	12
12	Masahiko Morita	Japan	12
12	Yuri Kolomeyko	Ukraine	12
16	Daniel Zink	Germany	10
16	Randy Davis	USA	10
16	Sean Smith	USA	10
16	Tomohide Sasakawa	Japan	10
20	Bill Stead	USA	8
20	Erik Leander	Sweden	8
20	Matteo di Tomaso	Italy	8
20	Michael Durham	Hungary	8
20	Radoslaw Gromko	Poland	8
20	Robert Stead	USA	8
26	Ben Romig	USA	6
26	Dani do Carmo	Brazil	6
26	George Kapalas	Greece	6
26	Josh Fleisch	USA	6
26	Jussi Perala	Finland	6
26	Morgan Douglass	USA	6
26	Omar Rohner	Spain	6
26	Sean Fitzgerald	USA	6
26	Takamasa Fukata	Japan	6
26	Tomoharu Saito	Japan	6
36	Craig Guile	USA	5
36	Daniel Bertelesen Smits	Denmark	5
36	Tatsuro Yoshii	Japan	5
36	Walter Leonardo Witt Palacios	Chile	5
36	Yuki Murakami	Japan	5
41	Antti Puurula	Finland	4
41	David Alexander	England	4
41	Eric Reasoner	USA	4
41	Fumio Hoshino	Japan	4
41	Gabriel Nassif	France	4
41	Harald Grove	Norway	4
41	Hugo Daniel Castro	Mexico	4
41	Jens Petersen	Germany	4
41	Jesse Wilke	USA	4
41	Joey Siagian	Indonesia	4
41	Kevin Quirk	USA	4
41	Rolf Arne Thronsen	Norway	4
41	Sam Lount	Canada	4
41	Terry Welty	USA	4
41	Toshiharu Niwa	Japan	4
41	Yong Siang (Mark) Chang	Singapore	4
41	Yujun Zhou	Singapore	4

Tournament Manager	Head Judge	Scorekeepers	Judge Certification
Jeff Donais (5)	Mike Donais (4)	Gordon Culp & Cajus von Engelman	Jakub Wysoczanski (4)

Judges

Collin Jackson (4)	Lutz Hofmann (3)	B Tucker (2)	Eduardo Terranova (2)
Cyril Grillon (4)	Matthias Nagy (3)	Bruce Cline (2)	Glen Monica (2)
Jakub Wysoczanski (4)	Paul Barclay (3)	Chad Brooks (2)	Jamie LaFountain (2)
Bernd Keller (3)	Pedro Ceriotti (3)	Chris D'Andrea (2)	Jan Willem Barends (2)
Davide Bitteto (3)	Pierre Calendini (3)	Christian Sieber (2)	Matt Villamaino (2)
George Macoukji (3)	Rogerio Alecrim (3)	Damien Guillemard (2)	Mauro Bongiovanni (2)
Gis Hoogendik (3)	Rune Horvik (3)	David Sevilla (2)	Nick Hable (2)
Ilja Rotelli (3)	Sheldon Menery (3)	Deke Young (2)	Roel Huting (2)
James Lee (3)	Thomas Pannell (3)	Duncan McGregor (2)	Akio Sugaya (1)
John Shannon (3)	Andrey Rybalchenko (2)	Eckhard S. Maass (2)	Luciano Macchiavello (1)

Asia Pacific Championship

Malaysia Hosts the Big Event

Jin Okamoto Reigns in Kuala Lumpur

by Alex Shvartsman

The first Asia Pacific Championship of the new millennium had all the makings of a good movie.

There was an exotic, colorful background: The tournament was held at the beautiful, five-star Sunway Lagoon Resort on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. It featured an exciting set of characters: Over 100 players from all over Asia, Australia, and New Zealand (seventeen countries in all) traveled to compete in this event. It even had an underdog hero and villains. This was the second large event held in Malaysia, the first being Grand Prix–Kuala Lumpur.

Although the competition itself would not start until Friday, the event truly began on Thursday night, when players made their way to the Sunway Convention Center to register for the tournament. As is always the case at international events such as this, old friends and new allies broke out into groups to swap "tech" for the upcoming Standard portion of the tournament or to run practice drafts.

The tournament officially began Friday morning, with Day 1 of the event featuring Limited play. After the draft and one round of competition, players were paired up for round 2 of the tournament, but they were asked not to begin the game. Instead, the lights dimmed, and the opening ceremony began.

One fine tradition in Asia is to celebrate any public event or convention with opening and closing ceremonies. The APAC Championship was no exception. Rays of concentrated light were used to create otherworldly images in the air above the players and were accompanied by the pulsing rhythms of pop music. After the light show, there was a display of traditional Malay dancing, complete with magnificent costumes.

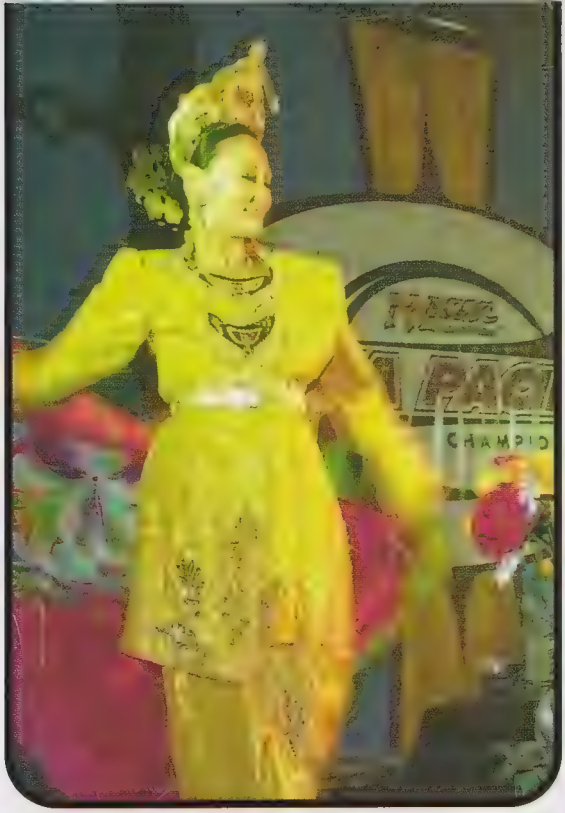
As the dancing reached its conclusion, the host of the show, Melvin Aeria, introduced himself to the crowd. Aeria warmed up the crowd and then introduced head judge Jeff Donais, who read a short speech. It culminated in the presentation of a large commemorative plaque to Alex Cheah to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Wizards of the Coast. Cheah is the distributor of Wizards of the Coast products in Malaysia and was praised by Donais as "one of our strongest and most dedicated global partners."

Japan's Jin Okamoto with the coveted APAC Championship.

Donais was then called upon to officially open the tournament by hitting a ceremonial gong three times. At the sound of the third gong, the lights dimmed again and the light show resumed. The show was well received overall, and the players entered the second round somewhat rested and excited to continue the competition.

The APAC Championship was the first major international competition to feature the *Apocalypse* set. Although the set was not yet legal for Constructed play, it was used in the Rochester Draft portion of the event. *Apocalypse* significantly altered the format. With it in the mix, two-color decks were a thing of the past. Three colors were the norm for the tournament, with plenty of competitors drafting four- or even five-color decks. One of them said that the key to drafting the *Apocalypse* set is to realize early on whether you are playing two colors with a splash of a third, or playing five colors. Japanese competitor Saito Tomoharu was the only player to finish Day 1 undefeated, and he retained his lead all the way through the Swiss portion of the event.

Six rounds of Standard play followed six rounds of Draft. The second portion of the event offered few surprises. The two archetypes comprising the finals at U.S. Nationals were the prevalent decks at the APAC Championship. The "Orbosition" deck that made a



Magic The Gathering® ASIA PACIFIC™ CHAMPIONSHIP

splash at various European Nationals a few weeks before weren't as prevalent here. Royce Chai, playing a "Fires" deck, was the only undefeated player in the Standard portion of the event. Right behind Chai, at 5-1, were several blue-white control decks, a red-black "Machine Head" variant, and a version of Adrian Sullivan's "Turbo Chevy" deck.

One of the more exciting running storylines of the APAC Championship was the competition between Japan, which boasts the most experienced and largest group of pro players in Asia, and the rest of the region. The competition is good-natured, but players from Taiwan, Singapore, and other countries work hard to outperform their eastern neighbors. Despite the best efforts of these nations, however, Japanese players made up the majority of the Top 8 again this year. Two competitors from Singapore—a country that is fast becoming one of the most important **Magic** locations in Asia—and a single player from Chinese Taipei joined five Japanese players in the Top 8. The dominant deck in the Top 8 was blue-white control. Satoshi Nakamura was the only player to use an unconventional deck in the Top 8—he played a blue-green "Opposition" deck that featured neither Static Orb nor countermagic.

In a relaxed finals, Jin Okamoto went on to defeat his friend Jun Nobushita 3-1 in a blue-white control mirror match to win the 2001 APAC Championship. The APAC Championship has a long history as the testing ground for upcoming Japanese pros—Satoshi Nakamura and Masaya Mori both ascended to **Magic** fame through this tournament. It is likely that Okamoto will follow in their footsteps to become one of the best players in the region.

In addition to the main event, over two hundred players competed in the $5,000 Malaysia Open, which took place the same weekend. In the finals of this tournament, Singaporean Kelvin Hoon defeated South Korean National Champion Ji-Hoon Kim in a blue-white control vs. Fires matchup. Most Continental Championships include a local "Open" tournament where local players have a chance to play in a large tournament and win some money.

APAC Championship Facts

Year	Location	Champion
2003	Japan	To be determined
2002	Taipei, Taiwan	To be determined
2001	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	Jin Okamoto
2000	Kowloon, Hong Kong	Masaya Mori
1999	Singapore	Masaya Mori
1998	Tokyo, Japan	Satoshi Nakamura
1997	Hong Kong	Nathan Russell

APAC Championship Top 8

The Players, the Decks, and the Matches

by Jeff Donais

The most popular deck type in the 2001 APAC Championship Top 8 was clearly blue-white control. Peter Chao, Sam Lau, Jun Nobushita, and Jin Okamoto all played the archetype. The rest of the Top 8 consisted of "Machine Head," "Saproling-Opposition," "Nether-Go," and "Fires."

Jin Okamoto

One of the top players from Nagoya, Jin Okamoto was a fairly regular Pro Tour and Grand Prix competitor without many top finishes. With fellow Nagoyan Jun Nobushita, he worked hard to practice for the APAC Championship and was rewarded with APAC's top title.

Okamoto's deck was designed by teammate Jun Nobushita (who placed second in the tournament) and differed very slightly from Nobushita's version (Nobushita played one main-deck Misdirection in place of a Dismantling Blow). Okamoto squeaked out a 3-2 victory against Satoshi Nakamura's Opposition deck in the quarterfinals. The final was interesting because Okamoto was paired against his teammate and friend, Jun Nobushita. Okamoto managed a 3-1 victory and became part of history.

Jin Okamoto
- Blue-White Control -

4	Absorb
4	Accumulated Knowledge
4	Counterspell
3	Dismantling Blow
3	Fact or Fiction
2	Last Breath
3	Millstone
4	Opt
3	Story Circle
3	Tsabo's Web
4	Wrath of God
4	Adarkar Wastes
4	Coastal Tower
8	Island
7	Plains

sideboard

1	Disenchant
3	Gainsay
4	Mahamoti Djinn
2	Mageta the Lion
1	Last Breath
2	Misdirection
2	Rout

Royce Chai
- Fires -

4	Birds of Paradise
4	Blastoderm
3	Flametongue Kavu
2	Kavu Chameleon
4	Llanowar Elves
2	Shivan Wurm
3	Thornscape Battlemage
2	Thunderscape Battlemage
4	Fires of Yavimaya
2	Ghitu Fire
4	Saproling Burst
2	Urza's Rage
1	Brushland
1	City of Brass
1	Darigaaz's Caldera
9	Forest
4	Karplusan Forest
2	Mountain
4	Rishadan Port
2	Sulfurous Springs

sideboard

2	Artifact Mutation
1	Blood Oath
2	Kavu Chameleon
1	Obliterate
2	Simoon
2	Slay
1	Terminate
1	Tsabo's Decree
3	Yavimaya Barbarian

Royce Chai

Chai is one of Singapore's finest players and has done fairly well for himself over the years. He finished 14th at Worlds 1999 and 35th at Worlds 2001. Chai also has two Top 64 Pro Tour finishes (Los Angeles 2001 and Tokyo 2001) and a fifth-place finish at Grand Prix–Sydney. He finished the Swiss portion of the tournament in third place with a 9-0-1 record.

Chai's deck was a fairly typical Fires build that splashed black and white for sideboard cards. He dominated the Standard portion of the tournament, going 6-0. Chai opted to use Yavimaya Barbarians in the sideboard instead of the main deck, as many people were doing in the tournament. The two Kavu Chameleons in his main deck served him very well, as one-third of the field was playing Counterspell-based decks. Chai's Chameleons almost led him to victory in his 3-2 loss versus Nobushita in the quarterfinals.

Katsuhiro Mori

This Japanese youngster has really made a name for himself over this past season, finishing the season with enough pro points to be crowned the 2001 Rookie of the Year. Edgy to the point of twitchiness, Mori looks like he survived the conversion from energy to matter with plenty to spare. Nowhere is this more evident than his lightning-quick play speed. He completes turns so quickly that it seems like he couldn't have had time to think. In his semifinal match against Jun Nobushita, the table judge had to ask both players to recreate their last turn because they had played an avalanche of spells so fast that the judge could not follow the action.

Mori used his own version of Nether-Go, which was being referred to as "Morikatsu-Go" throughout the tournament. He used three main-deck Nether Spirits and a Mahamoti Djinn as his victory conditions. Mori crushed Sam Lau's creatureless blue-white deck in the quarterfinals and went on to lose in the semifinals to the experienced Nobushita. Mori ended up with a very respectable third-place finish to add to his steadily growing résumé.

(Back) Lau, Chao, Nobushita, Mori, and Saito (Front) Chai, Okamoto, Nakamura.

Katsuhiro Mori
- Nether-Go -

1	Mahamoti Djinn
3	Nether Spirit
4	Accumulated Knowledge
4	Counterspell
2	Daze
2	Duress
4	Fact or Fiction
3	Foil
1	Misdirection
2	Recoil
1	Teferi's Response
2	Tsabo's Decree
4	Undermine
3	Vendetta
11	Island
1	Rath's Edge
4	Salt Marsh
4	Swamp
4	Underground River

sideboard

1	Air Elemental
1	Cremate
2	Crypt Angel
1	Duress
2	Engineered Plague
2	Gainsay
3	Glacial Wall
1	Mahamoti Djinn
2	Sleeping Potion

Sam Lau

A well-respected and intelligent player, Sam Lau has been around the high-level tournament scene for many years. Lau placed 33rd at his first World Championships in 1997 and has done respectably since then. Lau is a past Singapore National Champion and a Grand Prix Champion (Singapore 2000). Lau is clearly one of the top players from Southeast Asia and certainly has great potential for the future.

Lau played a well-constructed blue-white control deck in the Standard portion of the tournament. When it came to the Top 8, Lau had little chance of defeating Katsuhiro Mori and his Nether-Go deck. Lau had two main-deck Last Breaths and an additional one in his sideboard as the only ways to deal with Mori's Nether Spirits.

Peter Chao

Taiwan's Peter Chao had a previous Pro Tour appearance, but was relatively new to high-level tournament play before the APAC Championship. Chao was disqualified for making an agreement with Tomoharu Saito in the quarterfinals to receive money instead of playing his match. Chao's blue-white control deck could have done well against Saito's red-black Machine Head deck unless Saito had an exceptionally fast game start.

Peter Chao

- Blue-White Control -

2	Blinding Angel
1	Mahamoti Djinn
2	Serra Angel
4	Absorb
4	Accumulated Knowledge
4	Counterspell
3	Fact or Fiction
1	Misdirection
4	Opt
2	Repulse
2	Rout
3	Seal of Cleansing
2	Tsabo's Web
4	Wrath of God
4	Adarkar Wastes
4	Coastal Tower
9	Island
6	Plains

sideboard

3	Gainsay
3	Juntu Stakes
2	Last Breath
4	Meddling Mage
1	Misdirection
2	Sacred Ground

Satoshi Nakamura

Japan's Nakamura is a legend in the **Magic** world. Sometimes called the "hat man" for his collection of zany headgear, Nakamura is well respected for his playing skills and for his high degree of sporting conduct. His credentials include the title of 1998 APAC Champion, Grand Prix–Sapporo Champion, and many Grand Prix Top 8 and Pro Tour Top 32 appearances. Nakamura lost an extremely close quarterfinal match to eventual Champion, Jin Okamoto. Nakamura was later disqualified from the event for acting as an intepreter between Tomoharu Saito and Peter Chao. Although Nakamura made a mistake by being involved with this incident, his honesty and integrity are still among the highest in the **Magic** community. Nakamura's future is bright and good things are expected.

Nakamura's deck was arguably the most original in the tournament and certainly the most interesting in the Top 8. His blue-green Opposition deck used sixteen creatures, four Chimeric Idols, and four Saproling Bursts to lock down his opponents and eventually run them over.

Satoshi Nakamura

- Saproling-Opposition -

4	Birds of Paradise
4	Blastoderm
4	Chimeric Idol
4	Llanowar Elves
4	Silt Crawler
4	Fact or Fiction
4	Gush
4	Opposition
4	Saproling Burst
12	Forest
12	Island

sideboard

3	Compost
2	Disrupting Scepter
3	Spontaneous Generation
4	Prodigal Sorcerer
3	Waterfront Bouncer

Jun Nobushita

Japan's Nobushita has a reputation for being theatrical and has sometimes been called "The Japanese version of Mike Long." Nobushita has a ton of experience at high-level events, particularly Grand Prix events, where he has done quite well for himself. Nobushita is close friends with Jin Okamoto, and that relationship helped set the friendly tone for the final match.

Nobushita came prepared for Nether Spirits, with two Last Breaths in his main deck. He also had a single Misdirection (the only difference from Okamoto's deck). Nobushita had a strong deck and knew how to play it well enough to earn a second-place finish.

Tomoharu Saito

Saito had two respectable Pro Tour finishes under his belt before the APAC Championship. He was the leader after Day 1 of the event and kept that lead as he was the first seed going into the Top 8. His day ended on a sour note after he was disqualified for agreeing to pay Peter Chao for dropping before the quarterfinals.

Saito played Machine Head, a highly-aggressive red-black deck similar to Tom van de Logt's World Championship deck. He used a high number of creatures with light disruption.

Tomoharu Saito

- Machine Head -

4	Blazing Specter
2	Chimeric Idol
4	Phyrexian Scuta
4	Plague Spitter
2	Skizzik
4	Dark Ritual
4	Duress
4	Terminate
3	Urza's Rage
3	Vendetta
2	Void
6	Mountain
4	Rishadan Port
4	Sulfurous Springs
7	Swamp
3	Urborg Volcano

sideboard

2	Blood Oath
2	Engineered Plague
2	Flametongue Kavu
2	Pyre Zombie
2	Scorching Lava
2	Slay
1	Urza's Rage
2	Void

Latin America Championship

The Stars of the South

Scott Richards Takes Buenos Aires

by Toby Wachter

The 2001 Latin America Championship marked the end of one era and the beginning of another. The Constructed portion of the event represented the culmination of an environment that had been evolving since November 1, when the *Invasion* set became legal in Standard. The *Planeshift* set didn't introduce too many new decks to the environment, but it gave old decks some new toys to work with. "Fires" got Flametongue Kavu, Shivan Wurm, and Battlemages, making this already-dominant deck even better. "Rebels" received a gift in Meddling Mage, which allows blue-white versions of the deck to shut down specific aspects of any deck in the field.

Uruguay citizen and 2001 Latin America Champion, Scott Richards

Although the *Planeshift* set didn't offer much for players who wanted to make entirely new decks, the *Apocalypse* set changed everything drastically. The post-*Apocalypse* Standard environment will see an increasing variety of deck types, and the metagame will continue to evolve through to the *Odyssey* set. Even though the Latin America Championship did not include the *Apocalypse* set (the set became legal the day after the Standard portion of the event), it did offer a final glimpse of the Standard metagame that had been evolving for eight months. Players around the world were able to look back at where the format had been, which, perhaps, will give them new insight into where it is headed.

In fact, the decklists of the Top 8 players read as a showcase of the previous eight months. Every deck type that has been a dominant force in the Standard environment was represented, along with a few "honorable mentions." The metagame-defining Fires deck brought three players into the Top 8, as Alejandro del Gerbo Actis, Christiano Pereira, and Eduardo Sella all piloted the aggro powerhouse to the final rounds.

This result with Fires is typical and was probably expected. Fires is especially popular at three-day events that use a day of Draft and a day of Standard competition. If a player has a great record on the Draft day, he or she is likely to play a consistent aggro deck that can guarantee a strong, yet not spectacular, finish. Therefore, Fires is often the deck of choice for players who go 5-1 or 6-0 on Draft day.

It is interesting to note that even though Fires had a strong presence in the Top 8, it was entirely absent once the quarterfinals finished up. That's right—all three Fires decks lost. Del Gerbo Actis lost to Raphael Garcia's blue-white control deck, which traditionally does exceptionally well against Fires. Garcia's version was even stronger than usual in this matchup because he ran three main-deck Story Circles.

The most intriguing quarterfinal matchup saw Brazilian National Champion Christiano Pereira's Fires deck lose to Argentine National Champion Diego Ostrovich, who was competing on his home turf. Diego's "Orbosition" deck was easily able to handle the matchup, thanks mostly in part to Wash Out in the sideboard.

The other Fires deck eliminated early was Eduardo Sella's version, which packed four Shivan Wurms. He went up against Victor Galimbertti's rogue "Ponza" deck, which ran four main-deck Blood Oaths and the often overlooked Mogg Sentry. By using fast burn to eliminate Sella's mana-producing creatures, Galimbertti was able to slow down Sella's fatties from hitting the board quickly. He also used Blood Oath quite effectively—the card practically won games by itself, especially with the help of Tangle Wire.

The only match in the quarterfinals not to feature a Fires deck involved Scott Richards's "Counter-Rebel" deck versus Julio Silva Maciel's "Merfolk-Opposition" deck. Richards won in a close five-game match, advancing to the semifinals. In theory, Richards was an excellent matchup for Galimbertti in the semifinals, where Galimbertti's burn-heavy land destruction deck seemed custom made to beat Richards's Rebels. On paper, this was a nightmare for Richards's deck. Galimbertti was packing plenty of burn to handle all Richards's Rebel searchers, which would allow Galimbertti to eliminate them before they got to search. As if this wasn't enough, Galimbertti also had land destruction, which would deprive Richards of the mana he needed to search out Rebels.

The difference makers were two-fold: Galimbertti was mana screwed in two games, and Richards's sideboard made this normally lopsided matchup a fair fight. Circle of Protection: Red, Misdirection, Thermal Glider, and Wrath of God all came in, allowing Richards to handle various aspects of Galimbertti's strategy. Land destruction? Misdirection would bounce it back to Galimbertti's own land. Creature rush? Wrath of God would clear the way. Indestructible clock? Monored can't handle Thermal Glider. Total protection from all damage? Richards could just hide behind his Circle for an entire game.

This is even more important when you consider that the Top 8 matches were best three out of five games, which meant that the sideboard was crucial. A typical best-of-three match sees the sideboard potentially used in two games, while a best-of-five match potentially allows players to use their sideboards in four games. To illustrate the full impact of this difference, consider that Richards won two games almost entirely off CoP:Red—a card that he had only one copy of. Still, with four games to access it, he was able to draw it in half the games and use it to win.

The other semifinal match saw hometown hero Diego Ostrovich beat Raphael Garcia in a five-game match. Ostrovich then went to the final, where he competed against Richards for the Latin America Championship title in front of his compatriots. Richards won the Championship in

four games, mostly because his Rebel forces were simply more efficient than Diego's creature base. Most of the games came down to stalemates that Richards broke out of simply by searching out a massive army and attacking full force until enough damage got through.

Friday's Rochester Draft portion of the event was one of the first major Limited tournaments to use the *Apocalypse* set. The results were nothing short of chaotic. Some players stuck to the beneficial allied-colors strategy in the first two packs, only to find themselves at a loss for options in the third pack. Others forced enemy colors from the start so that they would be heavily rewarded in the final pack.

For example, Grand Prix–Rio de Janeiro Champion Carlos Romao forced blue-green-red and proceeded to clean up in *Apocalypse,* from which he was able to access powerful spells in the blue-green and blue-red color combinations. In total, he picked up three Jilts, a Temporal Spring, and a Minotaur Illusionist. Looking at the table tells the rest of the story. Cards such as Zombie Boa and Tundra Kavu ended up being drafted earlier than powerful cards, such as Jilt and Goblin Legionnaire. In fact, Romao even got one of his Jilts with an eighth pick. The bottom line here was that most players at the table sacrificed the ability to access more powerful spells in the last pack so that they could stay on target in the *Invasion* and *Planeshift* packs.

Another strategy that competitors used was drafting four- or five-color decks. This strategy created decks with high-quality cards, but at the expense of inconsistent mana bases. As a result, players picked cards such as Tundra Kavu and Primal Growth earlier than usual during the format. But which strategy is best? The switch from allied-color combinations to enemy-color combinations is a chaotic element that is sure to result in some tables breaking down from "friendly neighbor" strategies to free-for-all melees.

The next few months will allow players to learn more about how to draft with the changes the *Apocalypse* set brings, and Worlds will certainly be interesting to observe. If Randy Buehler blew up at Sigurd Eskeland for counterdrafting a card in a normal, allied-color draft, imagine what will happen when color switching is incredibly beneficial.

The other major tournament to occur during the weekend was the Argentina Open. This event was open to all players and had a $5,000 prize purse. Chris Benafel, who lives many miles to the north of Buenos Aires, came to the event to play in this Open tournament. Even though many presumed Benafel had a good chance of winning, the Pro Tour player did not even place in the Top 8. In the end, Jorge Rodriguez won the tournament with a Fires deck, while Mexican National Champion and Grand Prix–Buenos Aires Champion Hugo Araiza placed second with a Merfolk Opposition deck. Araiza had scrubbed out of the main tournament and then entered the Open tournament. He may have been disappointed in his performance in the Latin America Championship, but the $1,000 he earned in the Open probably cheered him up.

Other events took place throughout the weekend that entertained spectators and players alike. Pro Tour players Steve O'Mahoney-Schwartz and David Williams flew down to participate in some gunslinging. All comers were invited to step up to the plate and attempt to defeat the Pro Tour veterans and earn booster packs if they emerged victorious. O'Mahoney-Schwartz and Williams also helped to run the **Magic** Quiz Show, which is similar to the game show run by Mark Rosewater at Pro Tour events.

In what could be defined as the surreal moment of the weekend, the crowd participating in the quiz show became so enthusiastic that "crowd control" had to be brought in to make sure that the fine line between eagerness and chaos was not crossed. This was a notable difference from U.S. **Magic** game shows, which are much quieter and more orderly. This could probably be attributed to a difference in culture, as well as a difference in excitement over the game. Latin America is an area still gaining momentum as a global force in the **Magic** game. It could be said that American players have been "spoiled" because of the majority of Pro Tour events being held on U.S. soil, while the Latin America players are still excited to participate in major events—especially ones that are focused on them.

Above all else, the weekend of the event helped to elevate **Magic** in Latin America to another level. The **Magic** game may have started in the United States, but it has evolved into a global phenomenon. American players have been met on the Pro Tour every step of the way by European players such as Pro Tour winners Olle Råde, Sigurd Eskeland, and Kai Budde. This past year was considered Japan's breakout, as a Japanese player finally made a Pro Tour Top 8. From the results and level of play displayed at the Latin America Championship, it won't be long until this area is also considered a major force on the Pro Tour.

141 players made their way to Argentina for the $50,000 Championship.

Top 8 Profiles

2001 Latin America Championship

by Josh Bennett

Continentals are the apex of regional **Magic** competition. They are invitation-only events that cull the best players from their respective regions and test them in both Limited and Constructed formats. They also provide an opportunity to see some of the game's great unknown talents who have yet to be featured on a world stage. This article will examine the Top 8 of the 2001 Latin America Championship and discuss both the players and their Standard decks.

The most interesting thing about the Latin America Championship Top 8 was that it boasted a fair representation of the Standard environment before the *Apocalypse* set's debut. The dominant "Fires" deck grabbed three berths, proving that its consistency is deadly. Two decks descended from the "Orbosition" deck type came next, and the Top 8 was rounded out by blue-white control, "Counter-Rebels," and a highly unexpected "Ponza" variant.

Unsurprisingly, the Fires decks exited during the quarterfinals. When a particular deck type makes up more than one-third of the field, you'd better believe that the successful decks will be prepared to beat it. Such was the fate of Argentina's Alejandro del Gerbo Actis.

A self-styled "aggro" player, del Gerbo Actis has none of the mannerisms associated with that style. Not only is his play methodical, but his nature is also very reserved. During his match against Raphael Garcia, his poker face never slipped once, not even when his defeat was written on the board. Despite being so reticent, he was gracious in losing, a rare and commendable quality.

Del Gerbo Actis's Fires build was optimized to beat Orbosition decks. He had four Yavimaya Barbarians in his main deck but eschewed Thunderscape Battlemage. Otherwise, however, his deck was fairly typical. Interestingly, he sideboarded very little against opposing Fires decks, instead opting to pack heavy hate against control decks. His quick exit came courtesy of Garcia's blue-white control deck.

Del Gerbo Actis is a long-time player with a number of strong local finishes under his belt. His appearance in this Top 8 currently caps his résumé. He usually games with his team, mtgros.com, at a local bar. Perpetuating the stereotype about quiet, serious people, he is studying to be an accountant.

Next to be punished for choosing the most popular deck was Christiano Pereira. The Brazilian stands in stark contrast to del Gerbo Actis. Outgoing and friendly, Pereira's laid-back style brings levity to the table. He is also very expressive, and though he plays carefully, his face is always a window for his opponents. His matches were always entertaining. He'd lean forward to play a spell, victory in his eyes, only to have his whole face fall when his opponent revealed an answer.

During the school year, Pereira studies physics in Louisiana. This has understandably cut into his **Magic** play. Before he shifted his focus away from the game, however, he had a string of strong finishes, including a Top 16 at Grand Prix–Sao Paulo and a fourth-place finish at the 1999 Brazilian Nationals.

Pereira's version of Fires was clearly gunning for other Fires decks, with Aura Mutation and Rith, the Awakener in the main deck. His sideboard took this strategy even further, and as a result, he had few tools with which to combat Diego Ostrovich's Orbosition variant.

The last of the Fires players was Eduardo Sella of Brazil. He has a genuine love for the game that he puts before all else. Nowhere was this more evident than in his quarterfinal match against Victor Galimbertti, when surprise Blood Oaths would catch him with four creatures in hand and he would still smile.

Sella used more pure burn that most, but no Thornscape Battlemages, opting instead to max out on Thunderscape Battlemages and Shivan Wurms. His deck's top-heavy mana curve did him no favors against Galimbertti, whose Seals of Fire, Shocks, and land destruction were far too much to handle.

The fourth quarterfinalist, Julio Silva Maciel, took his match to the full five games. His was a tricky matchup: "Merfolk-Opposition" against Scott Richards's Counter-Rebels. It forced him to take the beatdown role, which was not his first choice. Richards managed to minimize the impact of Lord of Atlantis with his many blue mana–producing nonbasic lands, and because Maciel did not run much alternative-cost countermagic, he was unable to protect his backbreaking staticOrb–Opposition combo.

Maciel's game is definitely the best it's been since he discovered the **Magic** game at a local store in 1997. Seeing the text "Counter target spell." in action, he immediately fell to the siren song of blue and has been playing control ever since. This year, he placed 17th at Grand Prix–Rio de Janeiro, and followed it up with his good finish here.

When not testing the powers of "no" with Team M.A.S.S.O. or trudging through high school, Maciel loves to smash face with **Diablo 2**.

The only "classic" control deck to make the Top 8

was that of semifinalist Raphael Garcia. His deck fit the mold of traditional blue-white control perfectly, with plenty of land, counterspells, card drawers, spot removal for creatures, artifacts, and enchantments, and a win card only because it was absolutely necessary. Garcia spent his second day walking over Fires decks and continued that trend into the quarterfinals, defeating Alejandro del Gerbo Actis.

In the semifinals, he ran into Diego Ostrovich's Orbosition deck. Though he took the first game handily, Garcia had trouble after sideboarding because Ostrovich's deck had become a modified "Skies" build. In the fifth and deciding game, Garcia apparently had things stabilized behind a Story Circle: (blue), but couldn't get rid of Static Orb to advance his position. This let Ostrovich muscle an Opposition into play and steal the match.

Garcia himself fits the mold of the control player. His glasses give him a bookish expression, and he plays with a quiet determination. Away from the game, though, he's a tempest of a person, whose interests run as deep and varied as his fear of the press.

Quite the opposite is true of the other semifinalist, Victor Galimbertti. His rock-star style and self-confidence went hand in hand with his outrageous deck choice of Ponza. A virtually forgotten deck type, Ponza strives to limit opponents' options by depriving them of mana. This particular version punishes a Fires-heavy metagame by sporting eight Shocks as well as four Kris Mages. That's a lot of hate for Elves and Birds. It also plays a stall game with Tangle Wire and hits hard with Blood Oath, Urza's Rage, and Skizzik. Mogg Sentries combine with the Kris Mages for a good early-game matchup versus control.

After dispatching Sella with Blood Oaths for 12, Galimbertti ran into what observers thought was a bye into the finals: Scott Richards's Counter-Rebels. With a holster of burn to keep searchers off the table, and mana disruption to punish this mana-hungry deck, it seemed that Galimbertti was guaranteed victory, especially considering he'd beaten Story Circle: (red) twice during the Swiss rounds.

The dream matchup, however, quickly went south. Galimbertti dropped the fourth game to a turn-three Thermal Glider that went the distance, and a mulligan in the deciding game left him with virtually no play.

Galimbertti was surprisingly good-humored about his loss. He was quick to admit that he had the highest of hopes going into the semis, but stressed that the role of luck in the game shouldn't be ignored. Just as easily, it could have been his good fortune rather than Richards's. This almost Zen attitude carries over into his play. Galimbertti views the entire game from an engaged-yet-unconcerned perspective. It makes his mannerisms seem almost theatrical, as he can shift from uproarious laughter to dead-eyed seriousness without missing a beat.

Galimbertti is a long-time local player who hadn't broken through before this year's tournament. He's currently studying engineering and is a musician in his spare time.

Finalist Diego Ostrovich is the reigning Argentine National Champion. That status ensured that his Top 8 matches were packed with spectators and that his victories were cheered on by a multitude of voices. The silence that followed his defeat at the hands of Scott Richards stood in stark contrast.

While playing, Ostrovich immerses himself in the game, oblivious to the many eyes watching his every move. As soon as he's done, though, he becomes an animated speaker, drawing listeners to him as he relates the action of the previous game. Nowhere was this side of him more apparent than in his eleventh-hour defeat of Raphael Garcia. Overcome, he rose to his feet, threw his arms out, and shouted in triumph. Surrounded by his fans, it was truly a sight to behold.

Ostrovich's semifinal victory came on the back of his Orbosition deck. His version sported less search and more small creatures, with Ribbon Snake taking advantage of Static Orb. He even chose to run the gamut of alternative-cost countermagic rather than stick to the tried-and-true duo of Thwart and Foil. His sideboard, which featured Rishadan Airships, was able to transform his deck into a version of Skies.

Ostrovich was pleased with his performance and is excited at the prospect of Worlds, but he still feels that South America doesn't have adequate access to the Pro Tour. Though they have their fair share of Qualifiers, the cost of air fare is prohibitive. He envies those from Mexico who have the opportunity to show just how good they are.

Lastly, there is the 2001 Latin America Champion, Scott Richards. A long-time Pro Tour competitor (and easy to pick out of a crowd by his fiery red beard and trademark poncho), Richards was the soul of humility when asked about his incredible victory. Above all, he attributed his success to his Counter-Rebel deck and its designer, his cousin Damian Brown-Santirso.

The deck itself was a modern version of Counter-Rebel. It sported the powerful Meddling Mage and ran Reverent Mantra both to protect Lin Sivvi, Defiant Hero and to swoop for the win. His sideboard was predominantly anticontrol because the Fires matchup is so straightforward.

Richards was also surprised to escape the semifinals, citing Ponza as a nightmare matchup for him. He recognized that fortune had much to do with his victory there, but he didn't attribute any of it to his patient attitude. His modesty was genuine, and no one was more surprised by his success than he was. This admirable trait, combined with his skill and caution, is the true mark of a Champion.

(Top) Alejandro del Gerbo Actis, Scott Richards, Diego Ostrovich, Victor Galimbertti, Eduardo Sella (Bottom) Julio Silva Maciel, Christiano Pereira, and Raphael Garcia.

The Battle for Europe

Nitter Returns Title to Norway

by Rui Oliveira

At first, Milan seems just like a typical Italian city, a place full of old and beautiful monuments: the most famous opera house in the world, "Scala," which has dazzled people since 1778; Duomo, the world's largest Gothic cathedral, which took five centuries to complete; and the delicate beauty of the glass-roofed Vittorio Emanuele galleries.

Yet anyone who entered Pavilion 23 of the huge Fiera Milano on Sunday, July 1, 2001, would see that that image had been temporarily taken over by something else. Like Brussels in 1998 and Berlin in 1999, Milan was conquered by an implacable invader: the 2001 European Championship.

The Norwegian audience whispered *Vårt land* ("our land") as twenty-two-year-old Eivind Nitter pushed a horde of unforgiving Rebels into the Red Zone for the final blow. Norway, for the third time in four European Championships, was taking home the title. There were even a few jokes about kidnapping Noah Boeken (last year's Champion) and turning him into a Norwegian to keep all the titles in the land of fjords.

Once again, the Viking hordes had swept down from the freezing beauty of the north to terrorize the rest of Europe. In the footsteps of Sturla Bingen (1998 European Champion), who again this year made the Top 8, and Nicolai Herzog (1999 European Champion), Nitter's beaming smile was in sharp contrast with the cool and calculated way he slashed his way through the tournament to earn the title.

If Nitter's victory seems like history repeating itself, all you need to do is look across the table to see the winds of change. His opponent in the decisive match was none other than Swiss Champion, Dave Montreuil. The twenty-seven-year-old Canadian, now living in Switzerland, once again proved that dreams can come true. He took the monored deck that won him the Swiss national title and rode it into the European finals. The deck's sideboard surprised quite a few players, both for the crafty use of Ensnaring Bridge and the naïve use of his favorite card, Mogg Sentry.

His success indicates that despite the advent of the Masters Series and the aggressive push by some of the game's best to increase the competitive level of **Magic**, any player, no matter how long he or she has been a pro, can still hope to win it all. Montreuil started his European campaign by winning a Swiss Regional, which he followed with a surprising win at Swiss Nationals. His trip to Milan was full of tribulations, but he pulled through, even defeating three-time Pro Tour winner Kai "the Juggernaut" Budde in the last round to earn a spot in the fabled Top 8.

Montreuil's fairy-tale success is the unlikely mark of the unexpected, and awkward, internationalization of European **Magic**. With Ryan Fuller already ripping through the European Grand Prix circuit, Trey Van Cleave settling in Denmark, and Gary Wise planning the final details of moving from Toronto to London, Europeans are in for some stiff competition on their home turf.

As the players strolled in on Friday, everyone was looking for the familiar faces. Most of the top players made it, but some big stars were missing. One of them, two-time Pro Tour winner Tommi Hovi, was a victim of conflicting schedules, as he was finishing his military service on that weekend and couldn't be excused to attend the Championship. A central part of the English think tank, Warren Marsh, was also not present.

The tournament started with a nervous last day of Standard without the *Apocalypse* set. For most, the format was old and stale, with the best decks very close to their full potentials. It got to the point where the big teams began playtesting solely with sideboarded decks because the sideboards were all that remained to be tweaked. Day 1 was all about making the right deck—and especially sideboard—choice and getting lucky in the pairings (besides the obvious need to play at the top of your game). In a clear showing of the health of the environment, the field was very diversified, and included most of the viable decks.

"Fires" was still the deck in everyone's mind and was viewed as the defining deck in the format, but at the end of the day the seven

European Championship Top 4: Montreuil, Nitter, Zink, and Walamies.

rounds had a very different story to tell. In the first thirteen places (everyone with at least six wins) only Slovenian Andrej Brglez and Frenchman Cedric Gaaloul were relying on hasted green creatures to win.

Blue-based decks dominated the day: John Ormerod's "Orbosition," the Norwegian "Probe-Go," and various "Counter-Rebel" decks filled the top of the standings. In the midst of all this control bliss, Dave Montreuil's monored deck gave burn players all over Europe and around the world some hope.

Two players made it through the seven rounds without a scratch. Swiss national team member Sepp Neff piloted his own version of the "Animal House" deck (a green-white-red creature deck) to a perfect 7-0 record, and Germany's Wolfgang Eder's classic version of "Nether-Go" completed a similar sweep, defeating Raphael Levy's Fires deck in the seventh round.

Sadly, in what unfortunately seems to have turned into a big-event fixture, we again had some dubious situation, this time leading to the disqualification of Arto Hiltunen (a Pro Tour veteran with a ninth-place 2001 Pro Tour–Chicago finish to his credit).

During his match against Alexis Dumay, Hiltunen tried to scrounge a win by complaining about a previous miscount of an Accumulated Knowledge. His attitude turned against him as the judging staff, led by Head Judge Gis Hoogendijk, thoroughly investigated the matter and caught Hiltunen in several contradictions. In the end, he was disqualified for unsporting conduct, as once again the DCI proved it will not abide any shady situations.

Day 1 was also sad for another group of players, as some of Europe's most well-known names tumbled to the deep end of the standings. The most impressive dive belonged, without a shadow of a doubt, to Olivier Ruel. His deck refused to cooperate all day long and finally Olivier understood he could only take it with a smile and attempt to salvage this Championship on Day 2. He finished the Standard portion in last place with 0 points.

While Olivier's crash was the most spectacular, it was not the only one. Ben Ronaldson, Mattias Jorstedt, Patrick Mello, Konstantin Firsov, Erno Ekebom, Rui Mariani, Yuri Kolomeyko, Antonino de Rosa, and Nicolai Herzog all went back to their hotels wondering why their days ended with at least four losses.

If Friday was all about saying goodbye to an old friend (Standard without *Apocalypse*), Saturday was all about welcoming a new situation and a new challenge. The new situation was that everyone lost their best friend: The air conditioning broke down. For several hours, the intense Milan heat turned the site into a boiler room.

The challenge of Day 2 was drafting *Invasion* block with the *Apocalypse* set, which most viewed as the true testing point of this Championship. The last month, or three weeks to be more accurate, went by in a blur with most players deeply immersed in rebuilding their Draft strategies to incorporate the aptly named *Apocalypse* expansion. The result was myriad strategies, with most groups having opposite plans. Some praised green and blue, while others fought for white, hoping to grab some annoying Flagbearers. Basically, almost every combination had its die-hard fans. The more skeptical, or simply less prepared, preferred to allow the card pool to show them the way.

Whatever strategies and practice might bring, it was time to show some results. And that was exactly what Wolfgang Eder did by bringing his record to a cool 9-0 before losing to Jens Thoren. By the end of the first draft, Ormerod, Eder, and Thoren were on the verge of securing a spot in the Top 8, with 27 points over ten rounds.

Behind them, the pros who ran into trouble on Day 1 were climbing back with a vengeance. Budde, Tom van de Logt, Bingen, Sigurd Eskeland, Svend Geertsen, and Tomi Walamies all came back to within striking distance and were ready to finish their comebacks with a fight for the Top 8.

As usual, the last rounds were decisive, with players closely examining the standings to see if they had entered the intentional draw zone. Thoren continued to maul anyone who crossed his path, reaching an amazing 12-1 record before taking a well-deserved rest with an intentional draw against Ormerod.

The final round saw some of the biggest names in European **Magic** (Budde, Eskeland, Geertsen, and van de Logt) pushed out of the Top 8 to make way for lesser-known players. Sixteen-year-old current German Champion Daniel Zink, Eder (who also made the European Championship Top 8 last year), and Montreuil replaced those big names, turning this Championship into the birth of new European **Magic** stars.

The disappointment of the day belonged to Sepp Neff, who dropped all the way from first place to a 52nd-place finish, winning only one round on Day 2. Geertsen had the always-sad experience of finishing in the dreaded ninth place, after climbing back from the 17th spot on Day 1.

Despite the debacle by the veteran players in the Standard portion, some of them showed their abilities in the Draft portion. Fuller fought back from a 1-3 start to finish in 29th place, while Olivier finally found his groove and won four of the last seven rounds. For everyone who fell behind (and out of contention) early on, Day 2 served as some extra practice for the new format and a chance to play relaxing games against competent opponents.

In the end, and despite all the deserved hype surrounding the English-German and French-Dutch playtest groups, the four combined nations got only three players into the Top 8. The European Championship once again belonged to the often-unsung heroes from the north.

After three days of **Magic**, everyone went home with new stories and cool memories about those fourteen rounds.

Top 8 Profiles

2001 European Championship

by Gary Wise

Eivind Nitter

Apparently, loving life is a prerequisite for European Champions. Like his predecessor Noah Boeken, Eivind Nitter, winner of the 2001 European Championship, comes off about as laid back and relaxed as a man can away from the table. "I just like to do whatever feels good," says the twenty-two-year old student from Norway, who adds, "and winning this feels really good."

Nitter might not be the most recognizable name in Europe as far as pros go, but this isn't the first time he's finished high in the standings. After money finishes at his first two Pro Tour events, 1999 Los Angeles and London, Nitter embarked on a solid Pro Tour stretch, with nine appearances over the last two years. This season, he finished a personal-best 23rd at Pro Tour–Chicago, fifth at Pro Tour–New York with Team Outland (along with Nicolai Herzog and Bjorn Jocumsen) and fifth at Grand Prix–Göteberg.

Playing the "Counter-Rebel" deck that he designed with Sigurd Eskeland, Nitter cruised through Day 1 of the tournament, going 6-0-1, drawing only with Italy's Claudio Negrini. On Day 2, Nitter managed only a 2-2 record on his first draft table, but after starting the second table 1-1, he defeated Switzerland's Neff Sepp to advance to Day 3.

Once there, Nitter was able to defeat John Ormerod in a close five-game match before easily dispatching Tomi Walamies in the semifinals. In the finals, Nitter completed his quest for the Championship with his second straight sweep, this time over Dave Montreuil.

"Eivind . . . [has] really matured and started learning from his losses," said countryman Sigurd Eskeland. "I think that's why he's been improving so much as a player." Eskeland has been singing Eivind's praises for a couple of years now, so this was hardly a surprise. "I knew he had a chance to do really well, and when he made the Top 8, I thought he had a very good chance of winning it all." Now that Eskeland's prophecies have come true, Nitter can sit back and relax. He's won a European Championship, a $15,000 prize, and a lot of glory; and in the end, that all adds up to a lot of fun.

Dave Montreuil

It's amazing how much players can accomplish when they are set free. For years, Dave Montreuil played the **Magic** game in the DCI prison known as Victoria, Canada, a city that had no DCI-sanctioned play. Vancouver wasn't too far away, but the water between the two cities made the commute difficult, so Montreuil resigned himself to the fact that for him, the **Magic** game was just that—a game. As a result, he never played in those sanctioned tournaments.

A musician by trade, Dave and his wife moved to Switzerland in March so he could attend the Swiss Jazz School. Suddenly, DCI-sanctioned play was a realistic possibility. Montreuil attended Swiss Regionals on a whim, taking first place there before doing the same at Swiss Nationals. With the Swiss Championship in tow, Montreuil made his way to the European Championship.

There was just one problem: With both Montreuil and his wife attending school full time, the only money they had coming in was a $2,000 per month stipend supplied by her employers, with $1,400 of that spent on rent and health insurance. With only $600 per month to spend on food, clothes, and the like, Montreuil arrived in Milan with no money for accommodations and no acquaintances to ask for floor space. He slept in a park, where he was awakened the morning of the tournament by sprinklers.

What happened next is history: Montreuil smashed through the opposition with his red beatdown deck en route to a 6-0 start before squeaking his way into eighth place after Day 2 with a final-round victory over Kai Budde. With newfound confidence, Montreuil won a surprising quarterfinals match over Jens Thoren and a semifinals match over Daniel Zink amid the loudest cheers of the day before his run finally ended at the hands of Eivind Nitter. Taking home $7,500 for his trouble, Montreuil remarked, "My wife doesn't love the amount of time I spend on the game, but she was very supportive when I won Swiss Nationals." We're guessing that $7,500 will buy a lot more support.

European Champion, Eivind Nitter

Eivind Nitter

- Counter-Rebel -

2	Defiant Falcon
2	Defiant Vanguard
3	Lin Sivvi, Defiant Hero
4	Meddling Mage
1	Ramosian Lieutenant
4	Ramosian Sergeant
1	Ramosian Sky Marshal
2	Absorb
4	Brainstorm
2	Disenchant
4	Parallax Wave
2	Reverent Mantra
4	Adarkar Wastes
4	Coastal Tower
9	Island
8	Plains

sideboard

1	Aura Blast
1	Disenchant
3	Disrupt
2	Gainsay
2	Mageta the Lion
1	Rebel Informer
2	Teferi's Response
1	Thermal Glider
2	Wrath of God

Tomi Walamies

It's pretty amazing to consider how much Tomi Walamies has done at the tender age of twenty. Having played for over six years, Walamies has been on the competitive circuit since he was just sixteen years old, bursting onto the scene with what still stands as his best finish, a tenth-place finish at 1997 Pro Tour–New York.

Playing the same "Probe-Go" deck as Jens Thoren, Walamies went 5-2 in the Standard portion of the event before finishing off the Swiss portion with a 6-1 record in Rochester Draft. He then defeated Sturla Bingen in the quarterfinals before having his Championship dreams ended by Eivind Nitter in the semifinals.

Now a veteran of ten Pro Tour events, Walamies has yet to crash the elusive Top 8 party, but one has to think it isn't too far off. He finished 11th at the 1998 World Championships, made money at all three Pro Tour events he attended this year, won the always-tough Finnish National Championships, and now has a semifinals appearance at a European Championship to his credit.

Daniel Zink

What happened? That has to be the biggest question surrounding Daniel Zink. Six months ago, Zink was just another sixteen-year-old German kid trying to qualify for the Pro Tour. Each day he'd make his way to the local card store in his hometown of Bochum, Germany, to prepare himself for Pro Tour Qualifiers, only to eventually have his hopes and dreams crushed by better players. So, he took a break.

After finding a steady girlfriend, Zink found the **Magic** game less important than it once was, and with that realization came a release from the pressure to win. With this release came success. The rest is history.

In the last half year, Zink managed to qualify for his first Pro Tour (Barcelona) event, finish fifth at Grand Prix–Cologne, surprise the world by winning the German National Championship, and make it to the semifinals of the European Championship. Inherent in his success is a message that may be helpful to all of us: Remember that **Magic** is a game and don't take it too seriously and good things will come. They certainly did for Zink.

Sturla Bingen

This name should be no stranger to the student of Pro Tour history. While Bingen has been quiet as of late, this veteran of eighteen Pro Tour events has long been considered one of the most talented players on the planet, and the proof can be found in his resurgence at this year's European Championship.

Bingen, whose best Pro Tour performance is a fifth-place finish at Pro Tour–Paris, is no stranger to success on the European stage. Bingen will forever hold the distinction of being the first European Champion, as he won the inaugural tournament in 1998. He also has four Pro Tour Top 32 finishes and a **Magic** Invitational appearance on his résumé.

This year, the twenty-four-year-old math student, playing the same Counter-Rebel deck played by Champion Eivind Nitter, made it into the Top 8 on the strength of a 5-0-2 record in the Draft portion of the tournament before losing to Tomi Walamies in the quarterfinals. While the mana-screwed loss wasn't the way Bingen wanted to go out, his performance in the Swiss may be indicative of his second coming.

Wolfgang Eder

Perhaps the third time will be the charm. When Wolfgang Eder, a twenty-year-old student from Germany, made the Top 8 at the European Championship last year after making the German national team, there were still some who dismissed his performance as a fluke. Now, with his second-consecutive Top 8 finish, the detractors have been silenced.

Beginning the tournament with an amazing 9-0 record, Eder was one of only two players to go 7-0 in the Standard portion of the Swiss, but his luck ran out at the wrong time. When Eder faced German National Champion Daniel Zink in the quarterfinals, his "Nether-Go" deck lost to Zink's Counter-Rebel deck, just as it did at German Nationals.

Eder, who hails from Weinheim, Germany, has been to a few Pro Tour events, but with relatively little success. With just four Pro Tour appearances, Eder has not made a dime on the pro circuit, instead saving his best performances for the European stage. Perhaps a year from now he'll finally be ready to break through to the big prize.

Jens Thoren

There may not be a nickname in the game that gets to the point as directly as "Broken Jens" Thoren. Attending Gottcon, the biggest gaming convention in Sweden last year, Thoren went off, winning three of four tournaments held during the weekend. There was no other name that needed to apply.

Thoren lived up to his nickname at this year's European Championship by finishing an impressive 12-1-1, good for a 5-point lead on the field. Unfortunately, however, he ran into the Dave Montreuil freight train. "I thought it was a good matchup, but I knew it would get tough after sideboarding," Thoren said. The match went five games, and for a while, it looked like Thoren would pull it out. But in the end, it just wasn't meant to be.

Thoren hasn't yet had his big breakthrough on the Pro Tour circuit, but it's just a matter of time. A veteran of five Pro Tour events, Thoren has made money at all but one; his best finish was 26th place at Pro Tour–Barcelona. With luck, this year's European Championship is a sign the twenty-two-year-old math student has really hit his stride; if so, it's the Pro Tour that may be broken.

John Ormerod

The veteran member of this year's Top 8, thirty-two-year-old John Ormerod is no stranger to **Magic** success. A major cog in the team that operates out of England's Hampton Court Palace, Ormerod, whose lone Pro Tour Top 8 finish came at Pro Tour–Mainz a few years ago, is considered by many to be one of the best deckbuilders in the game.

A native of London, the computer programmer is responsible for many of the dominant decks to surface over the last couple of years: "Coco Pebbles," "Trinity," "Red Deck Wins 2000," and "The Solution" are decks that Ormerod had a hand in creating. At this year's European Championship, though, he played someone else's creation: "Orbosition."

Piloting the deck to 6-1 finish in the Constructed portion of the event, Ormerod cruised into the Top 8 before losing a bad matchup to eventual Champion Eivind Nitter. Despite the unfortunate end to a great weekend, Ormerod had no regrets: "It was nice to get under the lights again," said Ormerod, whose last Top 8 was at Pro Tour—Mainz in 1997. If he keeps outbuilding the rest of the world, one has to think it won't take very long for him to get back into the thick of things.

Swiss Champion, Dave Montreuil

Dave Montreuil

- MonoRed -

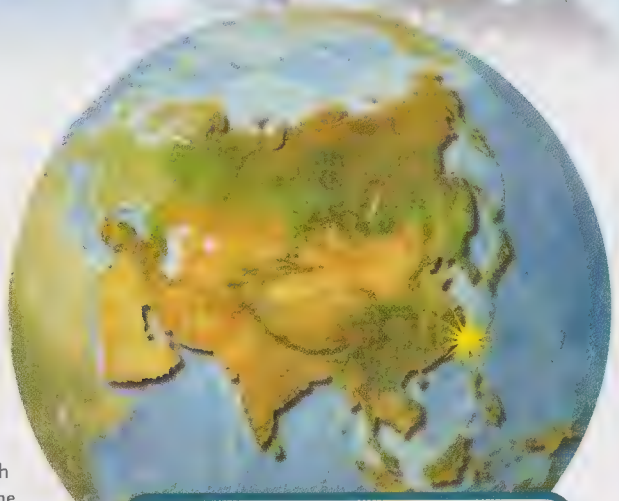
1	Firebrand Ranger
4	Goblin Raider
4	Kris Mage
2	Rage Weaver
3	Ghitu Fire
3	Pillage
4	Seal of Fire
4	Shock
4	Stone Rain
3	Urza's Rage
3	Volcanic Hammer
4	Dust Bowl
17	Mountain
4	Rishadan Port

sideboard

3	Blood Oath
4	Chimeric Idol
4	Ensnaring Bridge
4	Mogg Sentry

Grand Prix Taipei

by Josh Bennett



Eighty-five teams turned out for their chances at fame, pro points, and a fair-sized bag of cash. Three powerhouses turned up from Japan. The first was Datcho Club, which boasted Pro Tour regular Masayuki Higashino, two-time APAC Champion Masaya Mori, and Pro Tour–Tokyo finalist Tsuyoshi Fujita. The second was Fire Beat, which was composed of Tsuyoshi Ikeda, the always-deliberate Toshiki Tsukamoto, and 2001 APAC finalist Jun Nobushita. Third was Anchans, a one-time assemblage of some of Japan's greatest talents: 2001 Rookie of the Year Katsuhiro Mori; Itaru Ishida, the brains behind Pro Tour–Tokyo Masters Series finalists Panzer Hunters; and as if that wasn't enough raw talent, the two were joined by Osamu Fujita, one of the unsung greats.

Two teams even made the trip across the Pacific: Team Antarctica, with the combined forces of the O'Mahoney-Schwartz brothers and *the* Jon Finkel, as well as the latest incarnation of the nigh-unbeatable Team AlphaBetaUnlimited.com, this time with Dan Clegg and David Williams joining the perennial Chris Benafel. The stage was set for a slugathon of pangalactic proportions.

Going into the sixth round, the standings were headed by Team T.T.T., Taiwan's best Limited team, which was composed of Tzu-Ching Kuo, Dell Sun, and the irrepressible Doctor Wong. After their relaxing single bye, they stormed the playing field, winning four straight and springing into their sixth-round feature match on the backs of the mighty Antarcticans. There they met Anchans, who were also undefeated after a single bye. It was quick and brutal and Anchans led the pack for Day 2.

The break to twenty on Day 2 let in six teams with 4-2 records while casting nine others to the winds. All the nonlocal superteams made the cut, as well as two of the four from Hong Kong. The leading four teams were filled out with homegrown talent: Wrath of God, Dr. No-Right, and Team T.T.T. The format was Team Rochester, a format considered by the pros to be the game's most challenging.

T.T.T. got their own back in an eighth-round revenge match against Anchans, but intentionally drew the final round with ABU to ensure their respective berths in the Top 4. This turn of events left Anchans in the number-one position. The fourth spot was determined by a rumble of top locals, with Dr. No-Right getting the better of Wrath of God in the ninth round.

ABU defeated Team T.T.T. in the semifinals, partially on the back of David Williams's Dwarven Landslide, which was a last-minute addition to his deck. Dr. No-Right were also ousted, but not before taking a match from favored Anchans. Fans were disappointed to see both local teams eliminated.

The final between Anchans and ABU was a grudge match of sorts because ABU had taken the Tokyo Masters title from Ishida and the rest of Panzer Hunters. That loss was still fresh in the minds of the locals, and audience support was firmly behind Anchans.

Anchans were dominant early. They quickly led five games to three, thanks partially to Clegg's inability to deal with Standard Bearer. ABU's jocular mood evaporated at this first hint that the title might not be so easy to take. Clegg was overrun by Kastsuhiro Mori, and Anchans were de facto leaders.

Williams was not so quick to let go. He took a tense fourth game on the strength of Lord of the Undead and a pair of Shivan Zombies, making a race of the deciding game. With a handful of tricks, he was one turn quicker than Osamu Fujita.

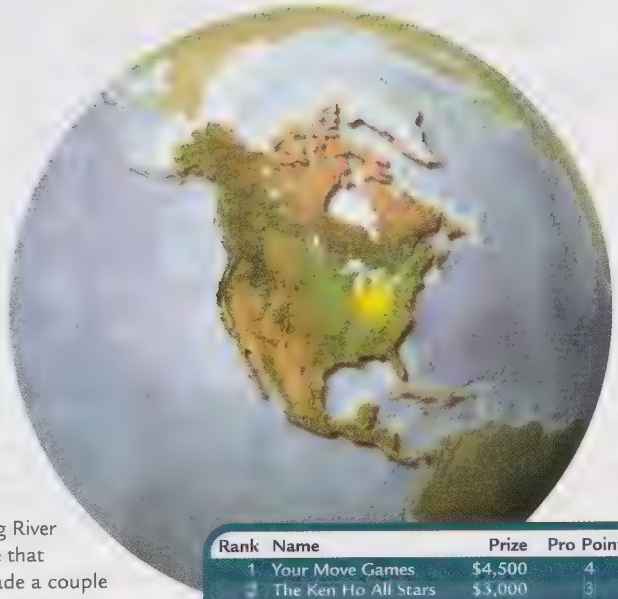
Next door, Chris Benafel was dispatching a mana-screwed Itaru Ishida. Ishida had gambled, playing just four mountains to support Tahngarth, Talruum Hero. It caught up with him in game 4, which saw him hiding behind a Radiant Kavu and taking aerial beats from a Voice of All. Benafel played off an empty hand to negate Gerrard Capashen's life-gain ability, and watched as three successive draw steps yielded no answers for Ishida. Team AlphaBetaUnlimited.com had done it again!

Between the Tokyo Masters title and their wins at Grand Prix–Yokohama and Taipei, there is no doubt that anyone hoping for success in the Team Limited arena would do well to study the ABU playbook. They certainly seem to have the format all figured out.

Rank	Name	Prize	Pro Points
1	AlphaBetaUnlimited.com	$4,500	4
2	Anchans	$3,000	3
3	Team T.T.T.	$2,100	2
4	Dr. No-Right	$2,000	2
5	Team Champion.com	$1,500	1
6	APAC	$1,500	1
7	Fire Beat	$1,200	1
8	Wrath of God	$1,200	1
9	Baal	$900	1
10	Lighting Monkey — RED	$900	1
11	Team B.H.	$600	1
12	hkmtg.com Team B	$600	1
13	GDT		
14	The Zoo		
15	M.T.R.		
16	Alligator		
17	I have three Dromar		
18	Solution		
19	Datcho Club		
20	Antarctica		
21	Madagascar		
22	Three Man		
23	US$4,500		
24	WWW		
25	Black House		
26	B.b.c. Mage		
27	CDT		
28	Daisy		
29	Beast		
30	Red Suns		
31	Black Tea		
32	First Store		
33	Vindcate		
34	L.L.S. team		
35	Diabolic Intent		
36	Phelddagrif		
37	A lu ba		
38	O-La O-La		
39	Demonic Alliance		
40	Team CK		
41	Jester's Cap		
42	Perdue		
43	Weaky		
44	Tea Shop		
45	Black Shop		
46	HKCCGA		
47	A.G.T.		
48	Moss		
49	Real		
50	[illegible]		
51	I.C.		
52	P.S (Perfect Skull)		
53	Ing Guei		
54	Lucky Number		
55	J.A.Y.		
56	D.R.M.		
57	Monkey Go		
58	Little Ghost Feeder		
59	Cola Forever		
60	Jumping		
61	ET		
62	D.M.T.		
63	Leo		
64	Wind		

Grand Prix Columbus

by Randy Buehler



Age and experience triumphed over youth in the final of Grand Prix–Columbus. Team Your Move Games has been a fixture on the team scene since team competition first began. They won the first team-format Pro Tour event, and they made the Top 4 at each other domestic team-format Grand Prix event. The Ken Ho All Stars, on the other hand, had never played together before, but they didn't lose a match all weekend. Dan Clegg has really come into his own this season, with five Grand Prix Top 8s and two Pro Tour Top 8s. In Turin, he teamed up with Brock Parker and Peter Szegeti as they beat AlphaBetaUnlimited.com in the final. In Taipei, Clegg joined up with ABU members Chris Benafel and Dave Williams and won again. Clegg teamed up with Ken Ho and Lan Ho (no relation) for Columbus, but his amazing run finally came to an end when the Ken Ho All Stars ran into Rob Dougherty, Dave Humpherys, and Darwin Kastle.

In the Rochester Draft finals, Clegg and Kastle both drafted black-red decks, though they did differ in the details. Knowing that both of them were quite likely to accumulate a lot of removal spells, Clegg placed a high value on cantrips that could bring his creatures back from the graveyard. He wound up with both a Recover and an Urborg Uprising, while Kastle didn't have any copies of either spell. What Kastle did have was a splash of blue for Shoreline Raider. His theory was that anti-Kavu cards (like the Raider and Coastal Drake) would be quite useful in the matchup because his opponent's red creatures were quite likely to be Kavus. It turned out that Clegg had only two Kavus in his deck, though, and one of them was Flametongue. Their games weren't particularly close, and Clegg took the match 2-0.

Dougherty and Lan Ho each played base green. Whereas Ho went for mana consistency and limited himself to three colors, Dougherty embraced a five-color design and wound up with amazingly high-quality cards. Their games weren't very close, either: Dougherty crushed Ho in two straight games. That left everything up to the control decks.

Dave Humpherys's upright posture, deliberate demeanor, and receding hairline were quite a contrast with his opponent. Ken Ho showed up with spiky hair, baggy pants, and the slouch of a 20 year old. Humpherys splashed black into his blue-white control deck so he could use black's discard spells to win the card-advantage war that always happens with control on control. Ho splashed red instead so that he could take advantage of more good *Apocalypse* cards.

Game 1 went to the youngster, with Humpherys fighting gamely despite having no white mana. He did his best to hold off a Wings of Hoped Minotaur Illusionist with his Cavern Harpy, but Ken Ho's Rushing River gained him such a tempo advantage that Humpherys couldn't recover. Ho made a couple of rookie mistakes in game 2, and they cost him dearly. It all came down to one dramatic game. Ho came out very aggressively in game 3, playing a turn-two Stormscape Familiar, a turn-three Razorfoot Griffin, and a turn-four Living Airship. He attacked as quickly as he could with those fliers, and used his Rushing River to clear a path as soon as Humpherys played a blocker. Humpherys, however, didn't panic. He calmly replayed his Samite Archer and his Faerie Squadron and stabilized the game at 7 life. Ho was out of gas, and soon it was Humpherys who was attacking with fliers for the win. Your Moves Games had captured the Grand Prix title and proved themselves once again.

There were also a number of Europeans who made the trip to North America a week and a half before Worlds. Kai Budde, Sigurd Eskeland, and Patrick Mello (playing as European Alliance) failed to make Day 2, but the French team—Antoine Ruel, Olivier Ruel, and Raphael Levy—finished in the money.

Every time a team-format Pro Tour event approaches, all the top pros form into the teams they think have the best chance to win. Dutch superstar Kamiel Cornelissen teamed up with Virginians Kyle Rose and Eric Froehlich, and their team, A Little Too Sick, grabbed sixth place. William Jensen, Matt Linde, and Brock Parker (playing as Huey, Brock, and Linde) grabbed fifth place.

Rank	Name	Prize	Pro Points
1	Your Move Games	$4,500	4
2	The Ken Ho All Stars	$3,000	3
3	Dynasty	$2,100	2
4	The Ancient Kavus	$2,000	2
5	Huey, Brock, and Linde	$1,500	1
6	A Little Too Sick	$1,500	1
7	Family Games Center	$1,200	1
8	Team $20 Dolla Billz	$1,200	1
9	Rug Doctors	$900	1
10	AlphaBetaUnlimited.com	$900	1
11	Frog Eaters	$600	1
12	Just Concede	$600	1
13	Team Needs/Hotel Room		
14	The Hubbsucker Proxy		
15	Thanks Craig and Seth		
16	Team Bald Dummy		
17	Team Flees		
18	Team Clasp		
19	Grape Apes		
20	Madam Fishnut		
21	Conan the Barbarian		
22	Antarctica		
23	Jovial Evil		
24	Egghead Games, Inc.		
25	Ride or Die		
26	The O-men		
27	5280		
28	PC Load Letter		
29	Sean Connery		
30	Team 0-3 Lunch		
31	Lazy Eyed Psychos		
32	100 Super Good Fun Time		
33	Collector's Corner		
34	Team Acme Smackdown		
35	Cherry		
36	Team Sports Bench		
37	Bags		
38	The Tails		
39	Who's the Other Dude		
40	Team AA		
41	Team Salmon		
42	Potato Nation		
43	European Alliance		
44	Shinku Hoboken		
45	Team John F. Rizzo		
46	$42 Ticket		
47	www.5color.com		
48	Wretch		
49	Big Dogs		
50	Crystal Pepsi		
51	superstarsnet.com		
52	Two Geeks and a Lumberjack		
53	Team Disgruntled Hobos		
54	Hot Fungusaur Invasion 2K1		
55	Deadguy		
56	AlphaBetaUnlimited.com/2		
57	Cavity Creeps		
58	Let's Get Dirty		
59	Cyanide		
60	Team Blatant Cheaters		
61	www.teamacademy.com		
62	Wheat and Rye		
63	Une Leche de FBI		
64	3 Stooges		

Humpherys, Kastle and Dougherty.

Canadian Nationals Recap

New Champion Terry Tsang

by Toby Wachter

Canada may be overshadowed by its southern neighbor at times, but the country has had its share of **Magic** success. Names such as Gary Wise, Ryan Fuller, Terry Tsang, Jay Elarar, and Jeff Cunningham often come to mind when the words ***Magic*** and *Canada* are put together. There is also a measure of Canadian influence at Wizards of the Coast, Inc., where former Pro Tour players Jeff and Mike Donais oversee various aspects of the **Magic** game.

Another claim that Canada has is that it is the only country besides the United States to ever win the team event at Worlds. Back in 1997, Canada took the prize and the bragging rights that go along with having the best **Magic** team in the world. Even though America has dominated the event since then, the fact that Canada has won the event when no one else has speaks volumes about the play level of the country.

As Canadian Nationals approached this year, many speculated that the team that emerged could once again claim victory at Worlds. The definitive American team members through the years, such as Jon Finkel, Michael Long, and Zvi Mowshowitz, had not made the team. Instead, Trevor Blackwell would be the leader on a team with two relatively unknown players: Brian Hegstad and Eugene Harvey. With an American victory in serious doubt, the eyes of the **Magic** world turned to Canada to see what team it would produce.

Adding to the importance of making the team was the fact that Worlds would be held in Toronto. Representing your country at Worlds is definitely something to be proud of, but doing it on your home soil is even better. The players at Canadian Nationals weren't just competing for money and a spot on their national team; they were also trying to earn the right to defend their country's honor in front of a crowd that would cheer them on. The one missing ingredient from the weekend was that the previous year's National Champion, Ryan Fuller, would not be present to defend his title. Fuller had moved to Amsterdam and had another stellar year on the Pro Tour and Grand Prix circuits.

Still, there were plenty of other Canadians who had great chances to do well during the weekend. Jay Elarar and Matt Vienneau had break-out years and had the experience and talent necessary to win a national title. Elarar made a Pro Tour Top 8 this season and achieved a second-place Masters Series finish. Meanwhile, Vienneau established himself as one of the top Limited players in the world, winning Grand Prix–Detroit and Grand Prix–Dallas, which were both *Invasion* Limited. Add to this list the names of Gab Tsang, Michael Gurney, and two-time Canadian National Champion Gary Krakower, and you have a number of players who would not only make the Canadian national team a contender, but also a team to fear.

The story of the weekend was that the Standard portion of the event would be the first major Constructed tournament to use the *Apocalypse* set. With Worlds only a few weeks after Canadian Nationals, it was apparent that the tournament would set the tone for the metagame. As a result, the attention of the **Magic** community turned its eyes to Ottawa for the weekend. Players of all skill levels, especially Worlds competitors, were eager to see what changes the *Apocalypse* set would bring. As a result, some players were forced to hold back their best decks. Gary Wise noted that he did not bring what he felt was the best deck for the format because he was saving that "tech" for Worlds.

For Wise, this probably came with some mixed emotions. On one hand, he had to stay loyal to his playtest team, and he also didn't want to risk his chances of doing well at Worlds. On the other hand, Wise had achieved plenty of success, but the Pro Tour Champion had never been on the Canadian national team or even made the Top 8 at Canadian Nationals. The idea of being on the team meant a lot to Wise, whose father Michael was a member of the Canadian **Scrabble** team. Additionally, this would likely be Wise's last shot at making the team because he planned to move to England in September. In the end, although he made the Top 8, Wise was not able to get through Tsang's "Skies" deck, and he lost a close five-game mirror match to Benny Wong.

Even though a Pro Tour veteran such as Wise had to protect the

Sam Lount, Terry Tsang, and Elijah Pollock

National Team
Terry Tsang
Elijah Pollock
Sam Lount

Alternate: Benny Wong

deck that he and his team had been working on, other players simply had nothing to lose and showed up with their best Standard decks. The *Apocalypse* set definitely made an impact, from the Spiritmongers in Sam Lount's "Fires" deck to the tech of Unnatural Selection in the sideboard of Wise's "Counter-Rebel" deck. Unnatural Selection, a strange blue enchantment from the *Apocalypse* set, may have been overlooked because it doesn't match the sheer power of cards such as Pernicious Deed and Vindicate, but it is definitely quite powerful in a Counter-Rebel deck. It allowed Wise to nullify opposing Rebel Informers, while his own Informers could handle any creature that came up, and allowed him to get around the normally devastating Tsabo's Decree. It also allowed him to pull other tricks, such as destroying an identical opposing creature by turning its creature type to "Legend."

The deck that ended up being the talk of the tournament was Ben Raymond's "Digger" deck. By using Gravedigger and Cavern Harpy, Raymond was able to reuse and recycle the come-into-play effects of Ravenous Rats, Urborg Emissary, and Crypt Angel. This may appear to be the kind of strategy you'd find a kid using at Friday Night **Magic**, but looks can be deceiving. Raymond qualified for Canadian Nationals through a "grinder" tournament, where his Digger deck went undefeated to earn him a spot. After that, he also went undefeated in the Standard portion of the main tournament, which made for some interesting reactions from spectators and competitors alike.

Although his deck seemed at first to be somewhat random and awkward, Raymond had a specific plan in mind. He predicted that Fires would not be popular and chose a strategy that would beat a field full of control. Because a Crypt Angel or Gravedigger can set off a chain reaction when it resolves, permission players will often run out of countermagic to handle every threat. As an added incentive, Raymond's opponents were naming the wrong cards with Meddling Mage prior to the Top 8 because they didn't know what was in his deck or how it worked.

Just as the *Apocalypse* set changed the face of Constructed, it had an even bigger impact in *Invasion* Block Draft. The format had previously been all about staying within an allied-color configuration. But the *Apocalypse* pack threw a wrench into that plan by offering overpowered and undercosted multicolored cards in enemy colors. Would players look to stay on target with colors and pass up powerful cards in favor of poor mana bases, or would they look to grab powerful cards and take their chances with multicolor decks?

One of the defining characteristics of *Invasion* block is that green gives you the mana fixers necessary to play a five-color deck without ending up mana screwed. While this means that cards such as Harrow, Lay of the Land, and Quirion Trailblazer are likely to be picked earlier than usual, it has the added benefit of allowing the drafter to play cards of almost any power. Indeed, this strategy was quite popular at Canadian Nationals, where "Four-Color Green" and "Five-Color Green" decks were quite popular.

After three days of competition, Terry Tsang won the title. After going undefeated during the Draft portion of the event, he carried his Skies deck through the Standard day and into the Top 8 where he finished the job. Tsang is used to **Magic** success—he has a Pro Tour Top 8 under his belt and was a member of the Canadian national team back in 1998. This gives the Canadian national team a leader who has proven himself in high-profile tournaments. Plus, being successful in Draft and Standard shows that Tsang is capable of success, regardless of the format.

Joining Tsang on the team was Elijah Pollock, who had success years ago on the Junior Pro Tour, including two Top 8 finishes. Pollock went 5-1 during the Draft and then played Counter-Rebel to an undefeated record, winning his first four matches and drawing twice to ensure a spot in the Top 8. He made it to the finals before having to concede because of a medical condition. After fighting his way through two five-game matches in the Top 8, Pollock had earned a spot on the national team and did not feel he was in any condition to play another match. Pollock consulted Head Judge Mike Donais before the decision was made, to ensure that it was legal. Donais ruled that since there was no bribe involved and it was the finals of a Nationals tournament and not a Pro Tour event, it was legal.

The final spot on the team went to Sam Lount, who is the least-experienced team member. Lount played a "Dark Fires" deck to earn a spot on the national team. This Fires variant is similar to an idea that many players had been using already—splashing black in a Fires deck to gain access to Tsabo's Decree in the sideboard and the black kicker on Thunderscape Battlemage. In this case, black also let Lount run Spiritmonger, which is one of the most powerful creatures in Standard. Even though Lount has no prior Pro Tour experience, he has shown that he can hang in there with some of the best players around and come out successful. Luckily, he is on a team with two players who are no strangers to Top 8 pressure, and their help, along with his talent, should allow Lount to do well at Worlds.

Deck tech and draft strategies may have been uncertain at this event, but the Canadian national team seemed be destined for success. They had a talented group of players and national pride to defend on their home turf. If anyone was going to dominate the team tournament and outperform the Americans, the Canadian national team definitely seemed up to the task.

Terry Tsang
- Canadian Champion -

4	Rishadan Airship
4	Rootwater Thief
4	Spiketail Hatchling
4	Troublesome Spirit
2	Waterfront Bouncer
4	Foil
4	Gush
1	Misdirection
4	Opt
4	Thwart
4	Wash Out
21	Island

sideboard

2	Alexei, Zephyr Mage
2	Hibernation
2	Misdirection
2	Repulse
2	Rushing River
3	Static Orb
2	Stinging Barrier

Shadowmage Infiltrator

by Jon Finkel

At the Magic Invitational in Sydney last November, my head was buzzing with different ideas for cards. They ranged from the "really bloody broken" to "wouldn't that be cool" to "that sounds like fun." My goal was to make a card that was all three of those at once. Of course, my idea of fun is different from that of most. As most people know, I'm a control player at heart, and I remember fondly the days of Millstone and "Counterpost" when four Adarkar Wastes were the first cards to go into any deck.

Unfortunately, my initial submission, Wrath of Lilnif, which for 1WWB destroyed all creatures in play and untapped four lands, was deemed ridiculously broken. I believe the exact words of one R&D staff member were "Not in my lifetime."

Whenever I'm asked the question "What's your favorite card?" I invariably give the same answer: Ophidian. I rode that devious little snake all the way to the 1998 U.S. national team, and playing "Forbidian" was the single most enjoyable time I've had playing a Constructed deck in a major tournament. So [illegible] eventually [illegible] to say good-bye, and the Ophidian's successor, Thieving Magpie, cost too much to be worthy. So after Wrath of Lilnif was turned down, I decided to rectify that situation.

There were two things that I believed were crucial to my new Ophidian, without which the card would never really be quite great enough. The first was that it had to cost three mana or less, or it would be like the Magpie, doomed to a life as a [illegible] card. The second was that it had to have 3 toughness.

I needed to throw in another ability, and the only possible solution, if I wanted it to remain at three mana, was to throw in another color. Out of the four remaining colors, I immediately dismissed red and green because not only are they blue's opposing colors, but also because I didn't really want to play a blue-green or blue-red deck. This left me to choose between white and black. As much as my heart wanted to go blue-white, the best ability I came up with was the "fear" ability in black, and, just like that, a card was born. The final version of the card, Shadowmage Infiltrator, is a 1/3 Wizard for 1UB that can be blocked only by black and/or artifact creatures and that gives you the option of drawing a card when it damages an opponent.

The question becomes "How can Shadowmage Infiltrator be best used in a deck?" Like Ophidian before it, the Infiltrator will find a home in a variety of decks. The new multicolored nature of Standard, [illegible] the popularity of [illegible] lands and [illegible] of Rishadan Port and Dustbowl, will undoubtedly give us a new multicolor-friendly format. Every two- and three-color combination will be worth exploring, and we'll even see our fair share of four- and five-color decks. In short, we'll have the most wide-open Standard field in recent memory. The Infiltrator's versatility and power will lead to it being played in any creature-based black-blue deck.

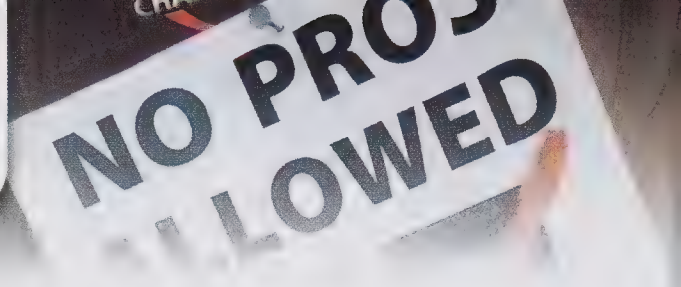
With that in mind, I decided to build a creature-based control deck, finally deciding on white as the third color over green, although I'm sure that a good blue-black-green deck can be built using the Infiltrator. One of the biggest advantages of playing white is that it makes selecting the rest of the creatures easy. The majority of spells in this deck cost three mana, so it's very important to have two-mana creatures so that the mana curve doesn't become too top heavy. The obvious fit into the two spot are Meddling Mage and Spectral Lynx, which are creatures that work as well offensively as they do defensively. Meddling Mage is an obvious inclusion.

November 2001 Standard
by Jon Finkel

2 Dromar, the Banisher
4 Meddling Mage
4 Shadowmage Infiltrator
4 Spectral Lynx

2 Absorb
4 Counterspell
4 Dromar's Charm
4 Fact or Fiction
4 Recoil
4 Vindicate

4 Adarkar Wastes
4 Caves of Koilos
4 Coastal Tower
1 Darkwater Catacombs
4 Salt Marsh
3 Skycloud Expanse
4 Underground River



Bonneville in Full Control

Second Annual Event without the Pros

by Toby Wachter

For many players, the idea of playing in the big leagues can be intimidating. Pro Tour players such as Kai Budde, Jon Finkel, and Zvi Mowshowitz have outstanding performance records in high-profile **Magic: The Gathering** events—performances that can often be directly attributed to countless hours of playtesting. For some of these highly successful players, **Magic** is not merely a game; it is a job. Hence, a "professional" on the Pro Tour circuit is further defined as more players make the game their primary source of income.

But what about the common man? What about the student who cannot fly all around the world, hitting every Grand Prix and Pro Tour stop? What about the family man who truly enjoys the game but would rather spend quality time with his wife and kids rather than playtest a new format for hours on end? Is there any way for this breed of **Magic** player to play in a competitive environment, free from the Zvis and Kais of the world?

Indeed there is. The Amateur Championship is a recent addition to the annual schedule of major tournaments, and it has been the perfect event for many **Magic** players who aren't quite up to the pro level yet. The restrictions for the Amateur Championship are quite simple: Anyone who has ever earned a pro point is not allowed to compete. This means that anyone who has played in a Pro Tour event or has placed well at a Grand Prix competition cannot participate, ensuring a level playing field for those involved.

On the surface, this concept would be enough for the **Magic** community to regard the Amateur Championship as a "scrub tournament" and completely ignore the results; however, history has proved the exact opposite. Last year, John Stevens won the Amateur Championship with a version of the "Angry Hermit" deck that first made a splash at 2000 U.S. Nationals. He didn't just outright copy the deck, either—he improved it. The Deranged Hermits and Skyshroud Poachers were cut in favor of the bigger Blastoderm. The idea Stevens worked with was that many competitors would be playing a variation of the Angry Hermit deck or its monogreen cousin "Trinity." By moving his creature base away from 1-toughness creatures and toward larger monsters, Stevens was able to use Earthquake very effectively. The ground would shake, and opposing Hermits would be destroyed along with their Squirrels, while the Blastoderms attacked over the empty battlefield.

The pros took notice of this result. Stevens's deck was dubbed "Amateur Hermit," "Son of Hermit," or the more accurate "Angry No Hermit," and the concept was used by many well-respected players at the 2000 World Championships. This established the Amateur Championship as a tournament to watch, not just to see who might be the next big Pro Tour player, but also to keep an eye on new deck "tech."

As far as the 2001 Amateur Championship was concerned, the eyes of the **Magic** community were focused on the **Origins** International Game Expo and Fair yet again, but this time with a specific purpose. The earth-shattering *Apocalypse* set had been the buzz of the **Magic** community since the spoilers hit the Internet, and the Amateur Championship would be the first high-profile Standard event to use the expansion. More importantly, with Worlds only a month away, the Amateur Championship was the **Magic** community's first look at what the *Apocalypse* set meant for the new metagame.

Tim Bonneville
Standard - July 2001

3	Nether Spirit
4	Accumulated Knowledge
4	Counterspell
2	Crosis' Charm
3	Fact or Fiction
3	Force Spike
1	Opt
2	Spite/Malice
2	Tsabo's Decree
3	Tsabo's Web
4	Undermine
4	Urza's Rage
2	Void
2	Crosis' Catacombs
9	Island
4	Salt Marsh
3	Shivan Reef
4	Underground River
2	Urborg Volcano

sideboard

2	Cremate
3	Disrupt
3	Hibernation
2	Juntu Stakes
3	Misdirection
2	Obliterate

So what did the Amateur Championship prove? If the entire tournament had to be summed up in one word, that word would be "permission." In the Top 8, seven decks were blue-based permission builds. That's right, every deck in the Top 8 had four copies of Counterspell, with the exception of Daniel Rodemann's, which was a black-white Phyrexian Arena deck. To gauge the full extent of the similarity of the decks in the Top 8, consider that there were no forests or plains to be found. Sure, there were minor differences, such as choice of win cards (Nether Spirit, Mahamoti Djinn, or Millstone), but the basic concept behind each deck was the same: control.

But what about *Apocalypse*? Surely this new and exciting set would break the monotony of a metagame that had been defined since November 1, 2000, when the *Invasion* set became legal in Standard. Sadly, that was not the case, or at least not where the Top 8 was concerned. Spiritmongers, Pernicious Deeds, and Wild Researches were plentiful at the tournament, but none made an impact in the Top 8. Perhaps this can be attributed to the complexity involved in breaking in new, powerful, enemy-color cards. After all, the aforementioned cards in *Apocalypse* cannot be simply thrown into any deck; plus, these players had only a month to test out the new set, which is certainly not enough time to explore every intricate detail of a wide open metagame.

One new card did make an impact in the tournament, though. Vindicate showed up in four of the Top 8 decks, perhaps suggesting that it could very well live up to the hype. This undercosted utility spell was used in every Top 8 deck that could support it. While the idea of a sorcery for three mana might seem like a risk for a control deck, the power of Vindicate is well worth it. This potent spell can eliminate any permanent on the table, no questions asked. Sure, it might mean tapping out, but by turn five it can be played while still leaving two blue mana sources available for Counterspell.

Who wins the permission-on-permission battle? Apparently Tim Bonneville does. The Top 8's permission decks were monoblue, blue-white, blue-black, and blue-black-white. Bonneville was the only player in the Top 8 to use red in his deck, and it proved to be the deciding factor. Four of the decks in the Top 8 used white spells, such

as Wrath of God and Dismantling Blow, to support their countermagic bases. This is nothing new: Blue-white decks have been a staple archetype for years. But, let's use this information to gain a better understanding of why Bonneville's deck had an edge over the other permission decks.

Spells such as the previously mentioned Wrath of God and Dismantling Blow are great in certain matchups. Against creature decks, Wrath can clear the board and give the permission player plenty of breathing room, and Dismantling Blow can take out threatening cards such as Saproling Burst. Now consider the merit of these cards in a permission matchup. Wrath of God doesn't do much when both players are using Nether Spirits as their only creatures, and Dismantling Blow has very few viable targets. What results is a great deal of suboptimal cards on the side of the permission player using white.

On the other end of the spectrum, let's look at what Bonneville has. Where the other players ran Wrath of God, Bonneville had Urza's Rage. Where the other players had Dismantling Blow, Bonneville had Tsabo's Decree, which can stop Nether Spirit recursion. Most importantly, where the other players sided in Millstone, Bonneville sided in Obliterate. Sensing a trend here? Bonneville had little-to-no dead-weight cards in the permission matchup; plus, he had uncounterable bombs in the form of Urza's Rage and Obliterate. Many of his games were won simply by playing a few Rages with kicker.

No matter how many cards the opponent had drawn or how much control his opponent had over the game, Bonneville could just deal lethal damage to the dome. It's also interesting to note that this strategy was even more potent due to the lack of Misdirections in the Top 8. Chad Caudell had one copy of the card in his sideboard, and Carl Winter ran two in his main deck. Other than that, Bonneville's Rages were free to hit their intended targets. Obliterate was another key spell for Bonneville in the Top 8, as it let him reset the board when things got out of hand. Just like Urza's Rage, Obliterate is uncounterable, which left his opponents helpless. Also, Bonneville was able to pop Nether Spirit, his victory condition, back into play after an Obliterate and attack through the empty board for the win.

With all these factors going his way, it's no wonder Bonneville was able to breeze through the Top 8, where he lost only one game. If the Top 8 had contained more variety, Bonneville might have had a rough time, but his permission deck was tuned to beat other permission decks, which gave him an easy road to the Championship.

The odd man out in the Top 8 was Daniel Rodenmann, who played a black-white Arena deck. This deck was not simply the only nonpermission deck in the Top 8, but it was also the only deck to use a substantial amount of cards from the *Apocalypse* expansion. The Arena deck type aims to gain card advantage through Phyrexian Arena, while disrupting the opponent's game with Duress and Gerrard's Verdict. The creature base is made up of Chimeric Idols and Nether Spirits, which make Wrath of God devastating to opponents, but hardly affects Arena players. Vindicate is a natural fit because of the deck's colors, as is Death Grasp, which helps the Arena player stay at a comfortable life total.

While the deck may seem quite powerful, you might wonder how it performs against the card-drawing power wielded by a control deck. Can Phyrexian Arena overwhelm the permission player, or will Fact or Fiction and Accumulated Knowledge negate it? This question was perhaps answered in part during the quarterfinals, when Rodenmann played against Steve Landen's blue-white control deck. The first game saw Landen match Rodenmann every step of the way. Two of Rodenmann's Arenas were destroyed as soon as they hit play with the help of two Dismantling Blows. Fact or Fiction helped Landen get ahead in the card advantage race, and his Millstones eventually finished the job.

Game 2 was even more intriguing because Rodenmann drew an incredible opening hand and still came up short. Duress was followed by two Gerrard's Verdicts, and it seemed that the game was just about over. The problem was that while the black-white Arena deck packs plenty of disruption, it is rather light on threats. Without a serious clock available, Rodenmann saw the game slip away as Landen drew into more cards, which allowed him to control the game and emerge victorious.

The lesson to be learned from this event is to always respect the power of a control deck, regardless of how chaotic the metagame might be. Even Rodenmann's Arena deck, which seems to be a nightmare matchup for control, was easily handled by Landen's classic blue-white control deck. Will this trend continue in the months to come? The term "Control Summer" may not be entirely appropriate at this juncture, but it perfectly defined the 2001 Amateur Championship.

Rank	Name
1	Tim Bonneville
2	Brad Cole
3	Carl Winter
4	Steve Landen
5	David Pan
6	Dan Rodemann
7	Tom Willoughby
8	Chad Caudell
9	Adam Minniear
10	Keith Hart
11	Cameron Heise
12	Jordan Berkowitz
13	Chris Vandenginst
14	Robert Castro
15	Matthew Idoux
16	Mike Pasquinzo
17	Jason Dooley
18	Alex Alford
19	Marty Reyes
20	John Shields
21	Gerrod Heize
22	Frank Scarber
23	Steve Reinhold
24	Harrison Osborne
25	Nathan Prinz
26	Adam Miller
27	Kevin Woloszyn
28	Michael White
29	Joshia Ochse
30	Jeff Liu
31	Matt Scott
32	Aaron Haynes
33	Jameson Orndorff
34	Jason Rose
35	Romzi Takieddine
36	Thomas Haver
37	Jeremy Comstock
38	Frank Anderson
39	Brent George
40	John Shortino
41	Jeremy Quinn
42	Tony Gargano
43	Blake Edmondson
44	Laura Karem
45	Todd Sickmiller
46	Mike Sylvester
47	Eric Thielke
48	[illegible]
49	John Lawrence
50	[illegible]
51	Craig Bennison
52	[illegible]
53	Andrew Benazet
54	Paul Lyons
55	Harold White
56	Matt Suggett
57	Brandon Miller
58	Brandon Gaddie
59	Marty Porter
60	Nicholas Prinz
61	Vincent Gaglio
62	Tim [illegible]
63	Dan Goldman
64	Tim Peters

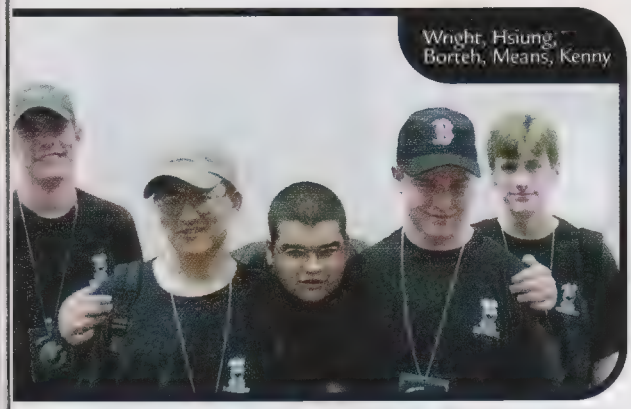
Sideboard Team Challenge

Teamwork Pays Off

Egghead Games Didn't Crack

by Toby Wachter

By its very nature, **Magic** is centered around the individual. Individuals make the decisions. They decide which decks to play. They decide which colors to play in a Sealed Deck tournament. Still, there is a social element present in **Magic**. Almost every successful Pro Tour player tests with a group before major tournaments. These groups analyze the metagame, allowing them to produce the decks best suited for the current environment.



Even though this is an example of teamwork in **Magic**, it lacks the specific aspect of group competition. A team may work on a deck for months, but in the end, an individual is left to fend for himself or herself. Sure, there may be money split among the members of the team, but as far as personal success is concerned, the fate of each player lies in his or her own hands.

This does not mean, however, that **Magic** is incapable of translating well to team competition. We have already seen the introduction of team Pro Tour competition, for which successful playtest teams have branched out and pulled together to achieve success as units. The well known Your Move Games team won the first team Pro Tour, and the O'Mahoney-Schwartz brothers joined Jon Finkel to earn many top finishes at team Pro Tour and Grand Prix events.

But what happens when the team concept is applied even further? What happens when teams become groups of five instead of groups of three? What happens when teams engage multiple formats and are challenged to assign members based on the respective strengths and weaknesses of each? The *Sideboard* Team Challenge at **Origins** 2001 encouraged players to step up to the plate and prove their worth as parts of their groups.

Each team assigned one player to each of five formats: *Invasion* Block Sealed, Masques Block Sealed, Extended, Type 1, and *Invasion* Block Constructed. So, for example, if Team A played against Team B, Team A's Extended player would face off against Team B's Extended player, Team A's Type 1 player would go against Team B's Type 1 player, and so on. The first team to reach three match wins would win the round.

This event was also nonsanctioned, which meant that suspended DCI players could participate. Ed Fear is currently serving a one-year suspension, but was allowed to participate in the *Sideboard* Team Challenge. His team was the most notable at the event, as it also included Chris Benafel, who has had quite an impressive year. Many participants and observers assumed this team would pick up the victory with ease, but surprisingly, they did not even make the Top 4.

The interesting variable to note in this event was the inclusion of *Apocalypse*. The *Sideboard* Team Challenge took place mere days after the groundbreaking expansion became tournament legal. Even though Standard was not affected, Extended and Type 1 were. Many had speculated that the overpowered enemy-color cards in the *Apocalypse* set would fit right into Extended and Type 1 because they contained true dual lands, which allow for any combination of mana to be readily available without the drawback of taking 1 damage each time mana is produced. Would this find cards such as Spiritmonger in Extended decks? Would Phyrexian Arena allow for a new style of "Necro" control to emerge? Would Vindicate be good enough to find its way into a Type 1 deck, where it would share company with Ancestral Recall and Time Walk?

Taking a walk around the tournament area answered the question: No. Or at least, not yet. The teams stuck to traditional Extended decks, with "Oath," "Turbo Land," white weenie and the ever-dependable "Sligh" all in use. The Extended environment has not been developed since Survival of the Fittest, Replenish, Demonic Consultation, and Necropotence were removed because the format hasn't been relevant for any Pro Tour or Pro Tour Qualifier season. Therefore, rather than take a risk, most teams went with tried-and-true winners. On the other hand, the case may be that some of the *Apocalypse* cards aren't good enough for Extended, where broken spells such as Fireblast and Force of Will still run rampant.

Type 1 is a different story, simply because the power level of the cards is so high

EGGHEAD GAMES INC.

First-Place Constructed Decks

Kenny Hsiung — IBC

- Black-White -

3	Desolation Angel
3	Phyrexian Scuta
4	Ravenous Rats
4	Spectral Lynx
4	Voice of All
3	Bog Down
4	Death Grasp
4	Gerrard's Verdict
3	Phyrexian Arena
4	Vindicate
4	Caves of Koilos
10	Plains
10	Swamp

sideboard

4	Addle
4	Crimson Acolyte
2	Dodecapod
1	Phyrexian Arena
4	Slay

Jason Means — STANDARD

- Three-Deuce -

2	Dwarven Miner
2	Elvish Lyrist
4	Granger Guildmage
4	Mogg Fanatic
4	River Boa
2	Skyshroud Elite
4	Cursed Scroll
3	Incinerate
4	Land Grant
4	Rancor
4	Seal of Cleansing
4	Swords to Plowshares
2	Mountain Valley
3	Plateau
4	Savannah
4	Taiga
3	Treetop Village
4	Wasteland

sideboard

4	Aura of Silence
1	Dwarven Miner
2	Phyrexian Furnace
4	Pyroblast
4	Sanctimony

Alex Borteh — TYPE 1

- Donate-Illusions -

1	Black Lotus
3	Brainstorm
1	Dark Ritual
1	Demonic Consultation
1	Demonic Tutor
2	Donate
4	Duress
4	Force of Will
3	Illusions of Grandeur
1	Mana Crypt
1	Mana Vault
1	Memory Jar
1	Mind Twist
1	Mox Diamond
1	Mystical Tutor
1	Necropotence
2	Pyroblast
1	Sol Ring
1	Time Walk
1	Timetwister
1	Tinker
1	Vampiric Tutor
1	Wheel of Fortune
1	Windfall
1	Yawgmoth's Bargain
1	Yawgmoth's Will
4	Badlands
3	City of Brass
3	Gemstone Mine
1	Strip Mine
1	Tolarian Academy
4	Underground River
2	Underground Sea
4	Volcanic Island

sideboard

2	Contagion
4	Hymn to Tourac
4	Negator
1	Null Rod
2	Pyroblast
1	Stroke of Genius
1	Zuran Orb

SideBoard team challenge 2001

that a card needs to be incredibly good to make the cut. *Apocalypse* had a small presence, most notably in Robb Childs's blue-white-red control deck, which used Desolation Angel and Lightning Angel as win cards. Still, the story of the Type 1 portion didn't have anything to do with the *Apocalypse* set. The truth is that this format is often neglected simply because it is an expensive one to compete in seriously. As a result, it is not used on the Pro Tour or in Qualifiers. In fact, the only major tournament to use the Type 1 format is the **Magic** Invitational, which happens only once a year.

The Type 1 metagame, therefore, is somewhat undeveloped. A tournament like the *Sideboard* Team Challenge, which incorporates Type 1, is interesting to follow simply because it gives players a glimpse into an often-ignored format. The usual builds, such as Sligh and five-color, were present. Still, the deck that really grabbed attention at the tournament was a monoblue design. Rather than going the five-color route to take advantage of powerful spells such as Mind Twist, Yawgmoth's Will, Regrowth, and Balance, this monoblue deck simply focused on card advantage and countermagic. But don't let this narrow focus fool you: The deck was incredibly focused on one job, and it did that job very well. It drew a lot of cards, countered any possible threat, and won with Morphling. In fact, Mana Drain allowed Morphling to come out incredibly fast. Have you heard of "Accelerated Blue"? Well, this is Moxes and Drains we're talking about, not just a Grim Monolith. For proof of this deck's effectiveness, look no further than Team TOGIT's Scott Kasliner. This Neutral Ground columnist piloted a version of this monoblue deck to a perfect 14-0 record before losing to Alex Borteh in the final.

The *Invasion* Block Constructed portion of the event was probably the most-watched match at each table because it is the format for the upcoming Pro Tour–New Orleans Qualifier season. This gave players a first glimpse at the drastic changes the *Apocalypse* set had brought, and perhaps suggested some last-minute "tech" changes to Pro Tour Qualifier players.

Looking at the decks shows that the *Apocalypse* set had shaken *Invasion* Block Constructed to its core. Phyrexian Arena decks were everywhere in many different forms. Kenny Hsiung of the eventual Champions, Team Egghead Games, played a black-white version that ran Bog Down to supplement Gerrard's Verdict and Ravenous Rats. Meanwhile, Osyp Lebedowicz of Team TOGIT splashed green into his version for Spiritmonger and Pernicious Deed, as well as for Armadillo Cloak in the sideboard. Scott McMullen of Team Wild Research took this a step further, playing Eladamri's Call in his black-green-white

The other color combination that made its presence felt was green-red. This came as no surprise because this combination had an incredible amount of success at Pro Tour–Tokyo. Perhaps the most intriguing innovation to this deck was in the version run by Ben Angel of Team Beatings. Angel used four copies of Lay of the Land, which allowed him to run a significantly lower land count (19). It also allowed him to search out his single swamp at will, which smoothed out his deck's mana base and allowed him to pay the black kicker on Thunderscape Battlemage more frequently.

After six rounds of Swiss play, TOGIT faced off against Beatings, while Village Idiots played Egghead Games. TOGIT won their semifinal match in impressive fashion, winning all three Constructed matches before the Limited matches could finish. Scott Kasliner continued his undefeated streak, as his monoblue control deck took out Andrew Just's "Stasis" deck. The *Invasion* Block Constructed matchup saw Osyp Lebedowicz's Arena deck up against Ben Angel's red-green-black beats deck, with the aforementioned Lay of the Land tech. Unfortunately for Angel, his deck had very few answers to an Armadillo Cloaked Spiritmonger or Voice of All. Finally, Patrick Sullivan's variant of Seth Burn's Sligh deck did what it was designed to do, beating Arun Sharma's Oath deck.

In the other match, Egghead Games took on TOGIT. TOGIT represented The Only Game in Town store in New Jersey, while Egghead Games represented the store their team name promoted. In fact, Egghead Games is located in Columbus, Ohio, which was the site of the *Sideboard* Team Challenge. Borteh, who placed in the Top 8 of this year's U.S. Nationals, was looking to lead his team to victory on their home turf.

Borteh, however, had a daunting task ahead of him. Many at the table assumed that Borteh's "Trix" deck would have problems with Kasliner's monoblue deck. Perhaps adding to the intimidation factor was Kasliner's impeccable record until that point. Surprisingly, however, Borteh managed to beat Kasliner with some topdecking, even after losing all his permanents to Kasliner's Masticore.

Rank	Name
1	Team Egghead Games
2	Team TOGIT
3	The Village Idiots
4	Team Beatings!
5	Team Troll & Toad
6	Team WeChangedOurName
7	Team China Cat
8	Team Constructicons

Speaking of bad situations, things didn't look good for TOGIT's Dan Ksepka, who was staring down Randy Wright's Cloaked Dromar in one of their games. Ksepka, however, managed to bounce back and win his match, thanks mostly to a great tempo draw. Osyp lost to Egghead Games' Kenny Hsiung in their Arena mirror match, and Patrick Sullivan's Sligh deck burned out Jason Means's "Three-Deuce" deck, despite Sanctimony coming out of the sideboard.

This left the Masques Block Sealed Deck format to decide the Championship. Egghead's John Kenny seemed to have the game within his grasp with Parallax Wave, but TOGIT's Adam Horvath was able to remove it with Aura Fracture. In the end, though, Horvath's blockers fell to Kenny's Shock Troops and Plague Witch, which allowed Kenny's creatures to go across for the victory.

FACTOID

TOGIT stands for: "The Only Game in Town", a game store in Columbus

After a long day involving five different formats, the hometown team Egghead Games came away with the victory, giving them some bragging rights and a $1,000 check to split. It's probably no surprise that the two teams in the final came from stores where they play together. These results prove you don't need to be a Kastle or a Finkel to put together a successful team.

COMING NEXT YEAR!

2002 GEN CON® GAME FAIR

Starting in 2002, the *Sideboard* Team Challenge will move to **Gen Con**, the largest game convention in North America. In addition, more prizes will be added, including a free *Sideboard* T-shirt for all competitors, exclusive *Sideboard* deck boxes, foil cards, and more. Teams will include players from Wizards of the Coast R&D, the DCI, and a special *Sideboard* team made up of our best strategy writers. Next year will feature four-person teams, which will make it possible for a carload of people to drive to the convention and play as a team. The four planned formats for next year are Standard, *Odyssey* Block Constructed, Extended, and Type 1. There will be a $5 entry fee per player.

Odyssey's New Mechanics

by Brian Kibler

— Threshold —

Of the two new *Odyssey* mechanics, threshold is perhaps the one that will require players to significantly rethink their play strategies. The threshold mechanic gives cards additional abilities when there are seven or more cards in their controller's graveyard. In some cases, threshold's impact is fairly marginal, and the cards are only a little more expensive than similar cards of comparable cost. Other cards are horribly overcosted for their base abilities, but tremendously undercosted at threshold. When determining which threshold cards are worthwhile to use, players will have to keep in mind that they may never reach threshold.

Threshold cards significantly alter the values of other classes of cards. Obviously spells that affect graveyards become more powerful as they can either prevent your opponent from reaching threshold or accelerate the accumulation of cards in your own graveyard, but less intuitive is the increased value of cantrips. While some cantrips are playable on their own merits, the threshold mechanic makes them even more useful by allowing a player to quickly fill his or her graveyard without wasting card resources. This makes previously scorned cantrip cards worth a second look if your threshold cards are powerful enough.

The threshold mechanic also forces players to rethink particular game strategies. In the past, many Draft and Sealed Deck games were defined by players exchanging damage with equivalent creatures rather than blocking and trading those creatures in combat for fear of an opposing trick. Threshold makes such trades considerably more appealing because they put cards into the graveyard. Even reaching or losing threshold can be a combat trick in itself, and players will have to be wary while dealing with threshold creatures in combat when their opponents have nearly—or they themselves have barely—seven cards in their graveyards.

Similarly, using the much-maligned strategy of chump-blocking to power up one of your threshold cards can become a valid option even when your life total is still in the double digits. Another option is to use removal spells earlier than you would otherwise. You may even send attacking creatures in to certain doom simply to get a few points of damage in and some cards into the graveyard. These complex interactions will favor the attentive player and will likely make the question "How many cards are in your graveyard?" just as popular as the question "How many cards are in your hand?"

— Flashback —

Flashback is the new *Odyssey* mechanic most likely to have an impact on Constructed play. Reminiscent of buyback in not only name but also application, flashback is a gold mine of card advantage. Like the *Tempest*-block buyback spells, most flashback cards are just slightly overcosted versions of other cards, but the ability to play them from the graveyard later in the game generally makes this additional expense more than worth it. Flashback cards, however, require a different sort of resource management than buyback spells did. While buyback spells forced players to decide whether to "burn" a buyback spell or wait to play it with buyback, flashback spells are much more straightforward: Play them now, and don't worry about them until you're ready to play them again later. This difference isn't just a simple matter of resource management—it drastically changes how flashback spells are played. Whereas countermagic was the nemesis of buyback spells, the polar opposite is true of flashback: Flashback spells give control players fits. While they may be able to counter Call of the Herd the first time, the second time around they may not be so lucky—and even if they are, they'll often have to spend two cards to nullify one of your own. This inherent potential for card advantage makes even the weakest flashback cards worth a second look.

Like threshold, flashback will require players to rethink the value of certain cards. Cremate, for instance, was simply a sideboard card used to get rid of opposing Nether Spirits, Pyre Zombies, and the occasional Hammer of Bogarden. In *Odyssey* Limited formats, Cremate-style cards are almost guaranteed to have a use, whether removing flashback cards or delaying an opponent from reaching threshold. If flashback spells become popular enough, Cremate may even become a main deck Constructed worthy card, as it can take out cards waiting ominously in an opponent's graveyard before they can be replayed.

Both threshold and flashback require players to be constantly vigilant to succeed. They'll require countless judgment calls about the value of cards in hand and in play versus those in the graveyard. Is it worth attacking into an opponent's creatures when he or she has four lands untapped and Sylvan Might in the graveyard, or should you wait until he or she taps out? Should I flashback my Call of the Herd now or play another creature from my hand and risk my opponent having some way to remove my Call from the game? Additionally, a player using flashback and threshold cards in the same deck will often have to make the decision whether to replay flashback cards or hold off to reach threshold as the two mechanics are directly at odds. All told, the flashback cards from the *Odyssey* expansion are sure to shake up things—over and over again.

Threshold

- Spells affected by threshold check to see if seven or more cards are in your graveyard when they resolve, not when they're played.
- Activated and triggered abilities that permanents gain at threshold only check the number of cards in your graveyard when they're played or triggered. Having fewer than seven cards in your graveyard when the abilities resolve doesn't stop them from resolving.

Static threshold abilities are simply "on" when you have seven or more cards in your graveyard and "off" when you don't.

Creature — Squirrel Beast
Threshold — Krosan Beast gets +7/+7.
(You have threshold as long as seven or more cards are in your graveyard.)
Those who see the squirrels go underground in the winter aren't ready for what emerges in the spring.

Firebolt deals 2 damage to target creature or player.
Flashback 4 (You may play this card from your graveyard for its flashback cost. Then remove it from the game.)
Reach out and torch someone.

Flashback

- When you play a card with flashback, it goes on the stack, so it's no longer in your graveyard. Your opponent can't try to remove that card from your graveyard in response because it won't be there any more.
- Playing a spell from your graveyard by paying its flashback cost doesn't change its mana cost. You're just paying the flashback cost instead.
  - Effects that make you pay more or less for a spell make you pay that much more or less for its flashback cost, too. They affect the spell's total cost, not just its mana cost.
  - When a spell played with flashback resolves or is countered, it's removed from the game and never goes to its owner's graveyard. Abilities that trigger on cards being put in a graveyard won't trigger when this happens.

ODYSSEY CARD LIST

● : rare ● : uncommon ○ : common

1	○	Aegis of Honor	✱
2	○	Ancestral Tribute	5 ✱✱
3	●	Angelic Wall	1 ✱
4	○	Animal Boneyard	2 ✱
5	●	Auramancer	2 ✱
6	○	Aven Archer	3 ✱✱
7	●	Aven Cloudchaser	3 ✱
8	●	Aven Flock	4 ✱
9	○	Aven Shrine	1 ✱✱
10	○	Balancing Act	2 ✱✱
11	○	Beloved Chaplain	1 ✱
12	○	Blessed Orator	3 ✱
13	○	Cantivore	1 ✱✱
14	●	Cease-Fire	2 ✱
15	●	Confessor	✱
16	●	Dedicated Martyr	✱
17	○	Delaying Shield	3 ✱
18	○	Devoted Caretaker	✱
19	○	Divine Sacrament	1 ✱✱
20	○	Dogged Hunter	2 ✱
21	○	Earnest Fellowship	1 ✱
22	●	Embolden	2 ✱
23	○	Gallantry	1 ✱
24	○	Graceful Antelope	2 ✱✱
25	●	Hallowed Healer	2 ✱
26	○	Karmic Justice	2 ✱
27	●	Kirtar's Desire	✱
28	○	Kirtar's Wrath	4 ✱✱
29	○	Lieutenant Kirtar	1 ✱✱
30	●	Life Burst	1 ✱
31	○	Luminous Guardian	3 ✱
32	○	Master Apothecary	✱✱✱
33	○	Mystic Crusader	1 ✱✱
34	○	Mystic Penitent	✱
35	●	Mystic Visionary	1 ✱
36	●	Mystic Zealot	3 ✱
37	○	Nomad Decoy	2 ✱
38	●	Patrol Hound	1 ✱
39	○	Pianna, Nomad Captain	1 ✱✱
40	●	Pilgrim of Justice	2 ✱
41	●	Pilgrim of Virtue	2 ✱
42	●	Ray of Distortion	3 ✱
43	○	Resilient Wanderer	2 ✱✱
44	●	Sacred Rites	✱
45	●	Second Thoughts	4 ✱
46	●	Shelter	1 ✱
47	○	Soulcatcher	1 ✱
48	○	Sphere of Duty	3 ✱
49	○	Sphere of Grace	3 ✱
50	○	Sphere of Law	3 ✱
51	○	Sphere of Reason	3 ✱
52	○	Sphere of Truth	3 ✱
53	○	Spiritualize	2 ✱
54	○	Tattoo Ward	2 ✱
55	○	Testament of Faith	✱
56	●	Tireless Tribe	✱
57	○	Wayward Angel	4 ✱✱

✦RAY LAGO

111	○	Afflict	●○
116	●	Bloodcurdler	●○
117	●	Braids, Cabal Minion	●○
118	●	Buried Alive	●○
119	○	Cabal Inquisitor	●○
120	●	Cabal Patriarch	●○○
121	●	Cabal Shrine	●○○
122	●	Caustic Tar	●○○
123	●	Childhood Horror	●○
124	○	Coffin Purge	○
125	○	[illegible]	●○
126	●	Cursed Monstrosity	●○
127	●	[illegible]	●○
128	●	Decompose	●○
129	●	[illegible]	●○
130	○	Dirty Wererat	●○
131	○	[illegible]	●○
132	●	Entomb	○
133	●	[illegible]	●○
134	●	Face of Fear	●○
135	●	[illegible]ished Ghoul	●○
136	○	[illegible]dy Elf	●○
137	○	[illegible]gling Imp	●○
138	○	Frightcrawler	●○
139	○	[illegible]	○
140	○	Gravedigger	●○
141	●	[illegible]	○○○
142	●	Haunting Echoes	●○○
143	●	Hint of Insanity	●○
144	●	Infected Vermin	●○
145	○	Innocent Blood	○
146	○	Last Rites	●○
147	●	Malevolent Awakening	●○○
148	○	Mind Burst	●○
149	●	Mindslicer	●○○
150	○	Morbid Hunger	●○○
151	○	Morgue Thief	●○
152	●	Mortivore	●○○
153	●	Nefarious Lich	●○○○
154	○	Overeager Apprentice	●○
155	●	Painbringer	●○○
156	○	Patriarch's Desire	●○
157	●	Repentant Vampire	●○○
158	●	Rotting Giant	●○
159	●	Sadistic Hypnotist	●○○
160	●	Screams of the Damned	●○○
161	●	Skeletal Scrying	○○
162	○	Skull Fracture	○
163	●	Stalking Bloodsucker	●○○
164	●	Tainted Pact	●○
165	●	Tombfire	○
166	●	Traveling Plague	●○○
167	○	[illegible]	●○
168	○	Zombie Assassin	●○
169	○	Zombie Cannibal	○
170	●	Zombie Infestation	●○
171	●	Zombify	●○

✦RICK FARRELL

58	●	Abosan, Cephalid Emperor	4○○
59	●	Aboshan's Desire	○
60	●	Æther Burst	1○
61	●	Amnesia	5○○
62	●	Aura Graft	1○
63	●	Aven Fisher	3○
64	●	Aven Smokeweaver	2○○
65	●	Aven Windreader	3○○
66	●	Balshan Beguiler	2○
67	●	Balshan Griffin	3○○
68	●	Bamboozle	2○
69	●	Battle of Wits	5○○
70	●	Careful Study	○
71	●	Cephalid Broker	2○
72	●	Cephalid Looter	2○
73	●	Cephalid Retainer	2○○
74	●	Cephalid Scout	1○
75	●	Cephalid Shrine	1○○
76	●	Chamber of Manipulation	2○○
77	●	Cognivore	6○○
78	●	Concentrate	2○○
79	●	Cultural Exchange	3○○
80	●	Deluge	2○
81	●	Dematerialize	3○
82	●	Divert	○
83	●	Dreamwinder	3○
84	●	Escape Artist	1○
85	●	Extract	○
86	●	Fervent Denial	3○○
87	●	Immobilizing Ink	1○
88	●	Laquatus's Creativity	1○
89	●	Patron Wizard	4○○
90	●	Pedantic Learning	2○
91	●	Peek	○
92	●	Persuasion	3○○
93	●	Phantom Whelp	1○
94	●	Predict	1○
95	●	Psionic Gift	1○
96	●	Pulsating Illusion	1○
97	●	Puppeteer	2○
98	●	Repel	3○
99	●	Rites of Refusal	1○
100	●	Scrivener	1○
101	●	Shifty Doppelganger	2○
102	●	Standstill	1○
103	●	Syncopate	2○
104	●	Think Tank	2○
105	●	Thought Devourer	2○○
106	●	Thought Eater	1○
107	●	Thought Nibbler	○
108	●	Time Stretch	5○○
109	●	Touch of Invisibility	3○
110	●	Traumatize	3○○
111	●	Treetop Sentinel	2○○
112	●	Unifying Theory	1○
113	●	Upheaval	9○○
114	●	Words of Wisdom	1○

✦ADAM REX

1	●	[illegible]	3
2	●	[illegible]	1
3	●	[illegible]	6
4	●	[illegible]	2
5	●	[illegible]	3
6	●	[illegible]	2
7	●	[illegible]	3
8	●	[illegible]	3
9	●	[illegible]	3
10	●	[illegible]	2
11	●	[illegible]	3
12	●	[illegible]	1
13	●	[illegible]	1
14	●	[illegible]	1
15	●	[illegible]	1
16	●	[illegible]	2
17	●	[illegible]	4
18	●	[illegible]	1
19	●	[illegible]	1
20	●	[illegible]	1
21	●	[illegible]	2
22	●	[illegible]	1
23	●	[illegible]	1
24	●	[illegible]	1
25	●	[illegible]	1
26	●	[illegible]	1
27	●	[illegible]	1
28	●	[illegible]	3
29	●	[illegible]	1
30	●	[illegible]	1
31	●	[illegible]	1
32	●	[illegible]	1
33	●	[illegible]	1
34	●	[illegible]	1
35	●	[illegible]	1
36	●	[illegible]	1
37	●	[illegible]	1
38	●	[illegible]	1
39	●	[illegible]	1
40	●	[illegible]	1
41	●	[illegible]	1
42	●	[illegible]	1
43	●	[illegible]	1
44	●	[illegible]	1
45	●	[illegible]	1
46	●	[illegible]	1
47	●	[illegible]	1
48	●	[illegible]	1
49	●	[illegible]	1
50	●	[illegible]	1
51	●	[illegible]	1
52	●	[illegible]	1
53	●	[illegible]	1
54	●	[illegible]	1
55	●	[illegible]	1
56	●	[illegible]	1
57	●	[illegible]	1

✦RON SPENCER

221	●	Bearscape	5
222	●	Beast Att[illegible]	5
223	●	Call of the Herd	2
224	●	[illegible]rapher	1
225	○	Chatter of the Squirrel	1
226	●	[illegible]	3
227	●	Crafty Cohort	1
228	●	[illegible]	2
229	○	Dangerous Terrain	1
230	●	[illegible]	1
231	●	Druid's Call	1
232	●	[illegible]	1
233	●	Gorilla Trainer	3
234	●	[illegible]	1
235	●	Hooting Wader	2
236	●	Howling Gale	1
237	●	Ivy Elemental	3
238	●	Krosan Archer	1
239	●	Krosan Avenger	2
240	●	[illegible]	1
241	●	Leaf Dancer	1
242	●	[illegible]	3
243	●	[illegible]	1
244	●	[illegible]	1
245	●	Nimble Mongoose	1
246	●	[illegible]	5
247	●	Overrun	5
248	●	Piper's Melody	2
249	●	[illegible]	1
250	●	Rabid Elephant	1
251	●	Refresh	2
252	○	Rites of Spring	3
253	●	Roar of [illegible]	1
254	●	Seton, Krosan Protector	2
255	●	Seton's Desire	2
256	●	Simplify	1
257	●	Skyshooter	3
258	●	[illegible]	2
259	●	Squirrel Mob	1
260	●	[illegible]	1
261	●	Still Life	2
262	●	Three-Tongue Basilisk	1
263	●	[illegible]	3
264	●	[illegible]	1
265	●	Tunnel	2
266	●	Verdant Succession	1
267	●	Vigor	3
268	●	Werebear	1
269	●	Wild Mongrel	1
270	●	Woodland Druid	1
271	●	[illegible]	3

✦HEATHER HUDSON

286	●	[illegible]	4
287	●	[illegible]	5
288	●	[illegible]	1
289	●	[illegible]	2
290	●	[illegible]	1
291	●	[illegible]	1
292	●	[illegible]	1
293	●	[illegible]	1
294	●	[illegible]	1
295	●	Opaline Dragon	6

✦RON SPENCER

296	●	Catalyst Stone	2
297	●	[illegible]	1
298	●	Darkheart Elf	1
299	●	[illegible]	4
300	●	[illegible]	6
301	●	[illegible]	2
302	●	Mirari	5
303	●	[illegible]	1
304	●	Ocean Justiciar	4
305	●	Sandstone Dragon	5
306	●	[illegible]	1
307	●	Skyflood Elf	1
308	●	[illegible]	2
309	●	Sunscape Elf	1

✦DONATO GIANCOLA

310	●	[illegible]	
311	●	[illegible]	
312	●	[illegible]	
313	●	[illegible]	
314	●	[illegible]	
315	●	[illegible]	
316	●	[illegible]	
317	●	[illegible]	
318	●	[illegible]	
319	●	[illegible]	
320	●	[illegible]	
321	●	[illegible]	
322	●	[illegible]	
323	●	[illegible]	
324	●	[illegible]	
325	●	[illegible]	
326	●	[illegible]	
327	●	[illegible]	
328	●	[illegible]	
329	●	[illegible]	
330	●	[illegible]	
331	●	[illegible]	

✦JOHN AVON

MVPs

Featuring: Odyssey

by Jeff Donais

Constructed MVPs

Constructed MVPs include cards that generate efficient card advantage, are extremely flexible, enable certain deck types (including quality mana fixers that allow multicolor decks), and have a powerful and influential effect on the game. Most big creatures can often be useful in small numbers in Constructed decks, but aren't considered Constructed MVPs unless they are really special (like the untargetable Blastoderm). Cards that can be found in almost any Constructed deck using the appropriate colors are probably MVPs. Cards like Birds of Paradise, Disenchant, Jackal Pup, City of Brass, and Duress are classic examples of Constructed MVPs.

Limited MVPs

Limited MVPs are slightly different from Constructed MVPs, even though there are many that will fall into both categories (such as Wrath of God and Earthquake). Limited MVPs have a significant and powerful impact on the game when they are played, either by allowing useful card advantage or by putting tremendous pressure on the opponent. Certain staple cards (like Zap or Giant Growth) might go into most Limited decks, but aren't considered Limited MVPs because they won't always have a huge impact on the game. Limited MVPs are cards that are potential first picks in Draft and always go into sealed decks that use the appropriate colors. Cards like Spiritmonger, Pestilence, Magma Burst, Pyre Zombie, and Rushing River are good examples of Limited MVPs.

Sideboard MVPs

Sideboard MVPs have a tremendous impact versus particular deck types, but are typically not versatile enough to be included in main decks. Cards like Boil, the Circles of Protection, Perish, and Anarchy are typical examples of Sideboard MVPs.

Aegis of Honor

As sideboard cards go, Aegis of Honor is top-notch at what it does. For a very low mana cost, you can turn the direct damage of your opponents against them. This enchantment is similar to Circle of Protection: Red, but it also has some important differences. CoP: Red has the advantage of protecting against both creatures and enchantments. The Aegis has the advantage of not being color specific; you can protect yourself from any color instant or sorcery. Because Aegis of Honor also redirects damage back to the opponent, it's harder for the opponent to run you out of mana by throwing damage spells at you. Keep in mind that Aegis of Honor also works against mass-damage spells like Earthquake. Although Aegis is a respectable choice for Constructed sideboards, it is of little value in Limited and should not be drafted unless you know your opponent is playing with a dangerous amount of direct damage.

1: The next time an instant or sorcery spell would deal damage to you this turn, that spell deals that damage to its controller instead.

PROTECT YOURSELF FROM DRAIN LIFE & FIREBALL.

Barbarian Ring

Land is a basic resource that every deck needs. Most of the best lands in **Magic** history have been lands that have a dual purpose. Lands like Mishra's Factory, Kjeldoran Outpost, Quicksand, Rishadan Port, Treetop Village, and Wasteland don't only provide mana—they also provide creatures, creature removal, or some control element. Having lands that serve two purposes is a form of card advantage, which is the key to winning games. These cards allow you to play fewer basic lands in your deck and worry less about early-game mana problems. All of those lands, however, trade off something in order to gain that card advantage. Usually the lands either produce colorless mana or come into play tapped. In the case of Kjeldoran Outpost, you actually have to sacrifice a plains when it comes into play, which produces early-game card disadvantage, in order to gain long-term card advantage.

Barbarian Ring
Add to your mana pool. Barbarian Ring deals 1 damage to you
Threshold — , , Sacrifice Barbarian Ring: Barbarian Ring deals 2 damage to target creature or player (Play this ability only if seven or more cards are in your graveyard.)

EARLY-GAME LAND, LATE-GAME SHOCK.

Barbarian Ring is a fantastic addition to the list of nonbasic lands that will see tournament play. It's the best of the five *Odyssey* threshold lands, and can serve the valuable role of creature elimination or direct damage to an opponent. That ability isn't useful in the early game because you need to have seven cards in your graveyard for it to kick in, but most red decks won't have trouble getting seven cards in their graveyards. A couple of Barbarian Rings in an Extended burn deck are also very useful, with lots of direct damage available and cards like Ball Lightning quickly filling up a player's graveyard. Barbarian Ring has the distinct advantage of coming into play untapped and providing colored mana, which is unusual for a nonbasic land like this. It does deal 1 point of damage to you when you tap it for mana. But in an aggressive red deck, that shouldn't be a major problem because your goal is to defeat your opponent before your own life total becomes an issue. Another huge benefit of Barbarian Ring is that it's a colorless source of damage. This can be very useful if you need to deal with a creature with protection from red or need to deal the last bit of damage when an opponent has CoP: Red in play. Barbarian Ring is a strong card in Limited. It should always be played in Sealed Deck, and it should be drafted somewhere around the third through fifth picks.

SUPERIOR LANDS DO MORE THAN JUST MAKE MANA.

Bearscape

When you look at Bearscape for the first time, it looks like it's an awesome way to generate a bunch of extra 2/2 creatures throughout the game. As your creatures are destroyed or your spells go to your graveyard, you need only to spend a couple of mana to turn them into Bears at instant speed. Indeed, Bearscape is a great way to gain long-term card advantage and a great way to offset the effects of mass-removal spells like Wrath of God or Earthquake. You can feel a little more secure about aggressively playing out your creatures if you know that you can turn them into Bear tokens when they die.

1, Remove two cards in your graveyard from the game: Put a 2/2 green Bear creature token into play
"Nature is the endless dance between life and death."
Seton, centaur druid

HELPS YOU BEAR THE EFFECTS OF MASS REMOVAL.

A word of caution: Using Bearscape does work against the two main themes of *Odyssey*. Because it removes cards from your graveyard, it will hurt your chances of reaching threshold. Likewise, it will not work well with flashback cards. Despite that significant disadvantage, Bearscape is still an excellent Constructed card and can absolutely turn the tide of a Limited match. It's a fairly early Draft pick, although not quite a first pick.

Call of the Herd

Call of the Herd
Put a 3/3 green Elephant creature token into play.
Flashback 3
(You may play this card from your graveyard for its flashback cost. Then remove it from the game.)

TWO BEEFY CREATURES WITH ONE CARD.

This is a solid card that will be included in almost any green deck. As with many other Constructed MVPs, the strength of this card lies in its card advantage. With one card, you get two 3/3 creatures. The 2 mana cost is also very affordable, especially in a green deck. It's not unreasonable to be able to play the spell on turn two (with a first-turn mana creature), and then play it again with flashback on the third turn. With four of these in every green deck, green will certainly be a strong contender for best color in the *Odyssey* set. The one disadvantage of Call of the Herd is that creature tokens are especially vulnerable to bounce effects. Once the token leaves play, it's gone forever. Call of the Herd is very strong in Limited and should be an early Draft pick.

Cephalid Scout

Cephalid Scout
Flying
2, Sacrifice a land: Draw a card.
The more they survey the dreadful dry expanses, the more the cephalids thirst to tame them.

TURN EXTRA LANDS INTO EXTRA CARDS.

Flying creatures are useful in Limited for their evasion skills. Cephalid Scout provides not only some flying offense, but also an amazing activated ability. This little flier allows you to turn lands you don't need into valuable cards. This is extremely helpful in the late part of Limited games when you begin to draw more lands than you really need. This ability is especially helpful in *Odyssey* block because you want to fill up your graveyard in order to reach threshold. Adding a few lands to your graveyard will help you reach threshold quickly and take advantage of the power that threshold offers. The Scout's MVP status will quickly become clear because it is a common and will show up frequently. Cephalid Scout is not a big, flashy creature and probably won't be considered by most to be a Limited "bomb." It is, however, a valuable addition to any Limited deck and can be an early Draft pick after the flashier cards have been taken (third to fifth).

Divine Sacrament

White creatures get +1/+1.
Threshold — White creatures get an additional +1/+1. (You have threshold as long as seven or more cards are in your graveyard.)
Their whispered prayers rally the nomads better than any war cry could.

TWO CRUSADES IN ONE.

One of the classic archetypes of the **Magic: The Gathering** game is white weenie, and a key component of this deck type has always been Crusade. Crusade adds some staying power to otherwise small white creatures. Divine Sacrament is like Crusade on steroids. If you can manage to achieve threshold, your white creatures will have an amazing +2/+2 bonus for each Divine Sacrament in play. With multiples in play, your creatures will be unstoppable.

To utilize this enchantment most effectively, you will want to play many inexpensive creatures and spells. The more creatures you have in play with Divine Sacrament, the more the enchantment helps. Inexpensive spells that fill up your graveyard will help you reach threshold faster to get the extra +1/+1 bonus. Some inexpensive *Odyssey* creatures that would go in a Divine Sacrament–based deck include: Auramancer (helps you bring back Sacrament if it gets destroyed), Dedicated Martyr (use to build toward threshold), Devoted Caretaker (protects Sacrament from Disenchant and your creatures from removal), Lieutenant Kirtar (creature removal and threshold enabler), Mystic Crusader (red and black hoser), Mystic Visionary (cheap creature), Patrol Hound (efficient creature), and Pianna, Nomad Captain (the ultimate attacker).

"Filter" Lands

STABILIZE YOUR COLORED-MANA SITUATION.

Darkwater Catacombs, Mossfire Valley, Skycloud Expanse, Shadowblood Ridge, and Sungrass Prairie are all useful additions to multicolored decks. They come into play untapped and don't deal any damage to you. The major disadvantage is that they are useless alone because they require one mana to activate. For that reason, it may be wise not to play four copies in a Constructed deck. If your mana base is light, you should definitely play only a few of these lands. If your mana base is deeper, you could risk playing four. If your opening hand contains only filter lands, you really have no choice but to mulligan. In a three-color deck, you should play 8 pain lands and 4 filter lands (2 of each of the appropriate type).

Filter lands work best in decks that need at least two colors of mana to operate. With any other mana-producing land, even lands that produce colorless mana, the appropriate filter land provides access to both colors of mana. For this reason, filter lands are especially strong with the *Seventh Edition* pain lands. Without dealing damage to yourself, you can use the first ability of the pain land (produce a colorless mana) and then use the filter land to generate the mana you need.

Filter lands have another element of risk: You may occasionally be stuck with more mana than you need. For example, you may have a mountain and a Mossfire Valley in play, but need only a single green mana to play Llanowar Elves. With that mana configuration, you will end up taking 1 point of mana burn because the mountain cannot produce green mana and the Mossfire Valley cannot produce green mana without also producing a red mana. This type of situation will probably be uncommon and shouldn't stop you from playing with the filter lands. Filter lands are useful in Limited and should always be played if both colors are used in your deck, although you shouldn't go out of your way to draft them early. With Rishadan Port rotating out of the Standard tournament environment, multicolored decks will become even safer to play, which will make filter lands particularly useful.

PAIN LANDS WORK WELL WITH FILTER LANDS.

Firebolt

Firebolt deals 2 damage to target creature or player.
Flashback 1 (You may play this card from your graveyard for its flashback cost. Then remove it from the game.)
Reach out and torch someone

A STRONG ADDITION TO ANY RED DECK.

If Firebolt didn't have flashback, you would still see it used as an extra burn spell in certain decks. Two damage for one mana is an acceptable cost and a valuable addition to almost any deck that requires creature removal. Burn spells are becoming more and more balanced since the old days of undercosted cards like Lightning Bolt and Fireblast. Firebolt may well be the most efficiently costed burn spell in today's environment and players should abuse that fact. With the added option to use it from your graveyard, the card becomes an automatic choice for any deck with red. The card's reusability and cheap mana cost offset part of the disadvantage of it being a sorcery. Firebolt is certainly a strong addition to any Limited deck and is a fairly high draft pick (second to fourth) because it can usually be used to eliminate two creatures or eliminate a 4-toughness creature if six mana is available. It's easy to gain card advantage when you use Firebolt to destroy two small creatures. You could destroy a small early creature at the start of the game, then use the flashback later in the game to destroy a strategically important creature like a flyer or a creature with a special ability.

Kamahl, Pit Fighter

THE NEW HERO.

Kamahl is the new hero in the postapocalyptic **Magic** world. Unlike Gerrard, Kamahl is a genuine tough guy. Kamahl's combination of abilities makes it absolutely devastating in Limited and powerful in the right Constructed deck. Although it is a little expensive at six mana, Kamahl makes up for that with haste, a power of 6, and the ability to Lightning Bolt any target, including the opponent. Even if your opponent deals with Kamahl as soon as it hits play, you can at least get one shot off.

Kamahl is pure offense. It does not work well as a blocker, unless you are willing to sacrifice it. If need be, Kamahl can block a creature, add its combat damage to the stack, and then use its ability to destroy another creature or deal an additional 3 damage to the creature that is being blocked. This is one of the few creatures that can block and destroy a 9-toughness creature by itself.

Kamahl is easily a first pick in Draft formats and should be included in any Limited deck with red. If you open one in Sealed Deck, you'll have a strong incentive to try to include red in your deck. Once Kamahl hits the board, it will probably dominate the game.

Persuasion

TAKE YOUR OPPONENT'S BEST CREATURE.

There is nothing more frustrating for your opponents than for you to take away their best creatures. Persuasion allows you to turn the tide of the game by doing just that. Persuasion is nothing more than the classic Control Magic for one additional mana. With today's properly balanced environment, five mana is the right price for an enchantment with this type of game-influencing power. Today's environment is also slower and more creature-based, thanks to the elimination of combo decks that can win the game in three turns. With those days behind us, we can now appreciate the value of stealing your opponent's best creature. Imagine the look on your opponent's face when you steal his or her Shivan Wurm, Mahamoti Djinn, or Dragon Legend. Persuasion is a terrific Constructed card and a first pick in Draft.

Mystic Crusader

Protection from black and from red
Threshold — Mystic Crusader gets +1/+1 and has flying. (You have threshold as long as seven or more cards are in your graveyard.)
2/1

DOUBLE THE PROTECTION, DOUBLE THE FUN.

Red and black decks have everything to fear from Mystic Crusader. Without threshold, the Crusader is an effective foil versus red and black and a passable creature. When threshold is reached, the Crusader becomes an excellent 3/2 flying creature for three mana and a nightmare for red and black. For Constructed purposes, Mystic Crusader won't necessarily make the cut for the main deck, but it will certainly find a place in sideboards, especially if red and black decks become prominent. For Limited purposes, it's a decent choice for white-heavy decks. Because creature standoffs occur fairly frequently in Limited games, the Crusader becomes especially valuable because it has the opportunity to become a flier. Also, because most removal in Limited tends to be red or black, the Crusader will be difficult to destroy.

Pianna, Nomad Captain

Whenever Pianna, Nomad Captain attacks, attacking creatures get +1/+1 until end of turn.
Some find inspiration in their swords. Others find it in their leaders.
2/2

THE CAPTAIN OF WHITE WEENIE DECKS.

Pianna, Nomad Captain is a powerful addition to any deck. When it attacks, Pianna gives itself and all other attacking creatures +1/+1 until the end of the turn. Even if it's attacking alone, Pianna is still a cost-effective 3/3 for three mana. Start adding attackers to the mix, and Pianna's value rapidly multiplies. Pianna is best used in a deck with many cheap creatures. Adding some creature removal to clear the path of blockers will increase the effectiveness of Pianna. When playing this card, it's important to have a solid, white mana base. Because it's a Legend, it's best to play fewer than four copies of the card. Pianna is a superstar in Constructed white weenie decks and a powerful addition to any Limited deck that can meet its mana requirements. If you are playing white, it's a solid pick in Draft (second to fourth).

Overrun

Creatures you control get +3/+3 and gain trample until end of turn.
The dance of angry feet
—Nantuko expression meaning "stampede"

THE ULTIMATE BREAKTHROUGH SPELL IS BACK.

This beast of a sorcery from *Tempest* has returned. This card turns the game around in a Limited game and can be useful in the right Constructed deck. In Limited, the power to give all your creatures trample and +3/+3 means your attack will make your opponent decide which creatures to sacrifice as blockers—if your opponent can avoid defeat at all. Of course, the best time to use Overrun is when you have a large enough creature advantage that your opponent has no chance to weather the attack. Overrun can be a good addition to Constructed decks, as it makes every Elf, Bird, and Squirrel into a dangerous attacker. Its 2 cost means that you'll need to have a heavy green mana base if you're playing Limited and that you should play a only couple copies of it in Constructed. If you are willing to commit to a heavy green mana base for this game-breaking card (which isn't a bad idea anyway) then Overrun is an early Draft pick (first to third).

Price of Glory

Whenever a player taps a land for mana during another player's turn, destroy that land.
"True strength lies in action. Let the weak react to me."
—Kamahl, pit fighter

PUNISH PERMISSION PLAYERS.

Red has always been the traditional nemesis of blue. One of the things that a red deck has always had to contend with is the annoying tendency for blue decks to counter important spells. What better way to make those pesky control players reconsider than by forcing them to sacrifice a land for every mana in their precious counterspells? You won't see too many end-of-turn Fact or Fictions played when four lands need to be sacrificed to play it. Price of Glory will virtually shut down any control deck and will impact any deck that relies on using mana during an opponent's turn. The value of Price of Glory in your sideboard is directly proportional to the amount of control in the environment. If you are playing a control deck, you should have enchantment removal ready after sideboarding when playing against a red deck that might use Price of Glory. This enchantment is almost useless in Limited, but it may be worth sideboarding if your opponent is playing blue.

Ray of Distortion

Destroy target artifact or enchantment
Flashback 4 ✱✱ (You may play this card from your graveyard for its flashback cost. Then remove it from the game.)

TWO DISENCHANTS IN ONE.

Disenchant is one of the most flexible cards in the **Magic** game. Some might even call Disenchant the best card still left from the original **Magic: The Gathering** release. Even at four mana, Disenchant would still be an excellent card. Ray of Distortion lets you have a Disenchant for four mana, and another one later for six mana. If the metagame contains many threatening artifacts or enchantments, Ray of Distortion is often a better choice than Disenchant. If your deck is very light on mana and can't support the mana requirement of Ray of Distortion, then Disenchant would be a better choice. However, most decks these days are able to support higher-cost spells since quick-win combo decks have been slowed down to a reasonable level. This means that many players will choose an artifact/enchantment killer that they can use twice.

Syncopate

Counter target spell unless its controller pays X. If that spell is countered this way, remove it from the game instead of putting it into its owner's graveyard.
"Memories can't simply be washed away. The mind must be scrubbed clean."
Ambassador Laquatus

POWER SINK MEETS DISSIPATE.

With all the threshold and flashback cards in the *Odyssey* block, it's important to be prepared to deal with cards that go into your opponent's graveyard. The best way to prevent your opponent from getting a card into his or her graveyard is to remove the card from the game entirely. Syncopate removes any spell it counters from the game, which not only negates a second use with flashback, but also throws a wrench into a player's plans to reach threshold. With only one colored mana in its cost, Syncopate can be splashed easily into a deck and will no doubt become popular once flashback cards become commonplace. The one disadvantage Syncopate has compared to Power Sink is that it does not force lands to be tapped. Even so, Syncopate will surely find its way into many Constructed decks and will be useful in Limited decks. In Draft, Syncopate is a strong pick (third to fifth).

Shadowmage Infiltrator

Shadowmage Infiltrator can't be blocked except by artifact creatures and/or black creatures.
Whenever Shadowmage Infiltrator deals combat damage to a player, you may draw a card

MAKE FINKEL PART OF YOUR DECK.

Everything Jon Finkel touches turns to gold. Whether he is winning a Pro Tour event, National Championship, **Magic** Invitational, or World Championship, Finkel equals excellence. Finkel's **Magic** Invitational card is no different. Ophidian was one of Finkel's favorite cards, and Shadowmage Infiltrator is a scarier version of Ophidian. In the form of Shadowmage Infiltrator, Ophidian now finds itself almost unblockable, a powerful addition to Constructed decks and an even better addition to Limited decks, where blockers are more common.

The Infiltrator is a powerhouse in Limited and will usually result in an extra card every turn. It's reasonably difficult to destroy because it's a black creature with 3 toughness. If the opponent doesn't stop the Infiltrator, the card advantage will almost certainly mean defeat. Constructed decks will be built around getting Infiltrator into play and protecting it, much like the traditional Ophidian and Thieving Magpie did in the past. As one of the most powerful cards in the *Odyssey* set, Shadowmage Infiltrator is a must for any Limited deck and is a first pick in Draft.

Thought Devourer

BIG & CHEAP.

Looking down on the board and seeing a 4/4 flying creature on your side of the table elicits a warm feeling. It's an even better feeling having the flier on the table on turn four. Thought Devourer definitely makes that possible. For only 2 ◆ ◆, Thought Devourer is a big flier with a drawback that can be reasonably worked around. The key is playing cheap spells that allow you to empty your hand reasonably quickly. Thought Devourer is a good addition to an aggressive blue weenie deck and is a second to fourth pick in Draft.

Spellbane Centaur

Creatures you control can't be the targets of blue spells or abilities from blue sources.
"No mage's deception can harm those who keep nature balanced"

STOP BLUE FROM INTERFERING.

Once the *Odyssey* set becomes legal in Constructed tournaments, players of blue are sure to steal your creatures with spells like Persuasion or bounce your creatures with Repel. Players are also sure to continue to use popular cards like Opposition to mess with you. If you find yourself facing these kinds of problems from blue, simply call in a few Spellbane Centaurs to stop the opposition cold. But the Centaur is also a strong creature even without taking its ability into consideration. It requires only one colored mana and provides a 3-power creature for three mana. Even if you don't expect much blue, it's definitely a strong consideration for the main deck in Limited tournaments. Spellbane Centaur is a moderately good pick in Draft, but if you know you are playing an opponent with heavy blue (such as in Team Rochester Draft when you can watch your opponent draft), the Centaur becomes an early pick.

Wild Mongrel

Discard a card from your hand: Wild Mongrel gets +1 +1 and becomes the color of your choice until end of turn.
It teaches you to play dead.

BEST TWO-MANA CREATURE IN STANDARD.

The second turn is one of the most important for any aggressive deck. The second turn can be used to play a two-mana creature, a three-mana creature (if a Llanowar Elves or Birds of Paradise was played on turn one), or to play two one-mana creatures. In today's Standard environment, you would be hard pressed to find a better creature than Wild Mongrel. Without taking into consideration its powerful ability, Wild Mongrel is a 2/2 creature for two mana. With its ability (Discard a card from your hand: Wild Mongrel gets +1/+1 and becomes the color of your choice until end of turn.), it's an incredible deal. It's difficult to destroy and great in combat. One of the best things about Wild Mongrel is its efficient activation cost—you will never be caught off guard as long as you have a card in your hand. The ability itself is quite powerful. The boost in power and toughness makes it both more formidable in combat and better able to avoid destruction by direct damage. The color change allows it to get around enchantments like CoP: Green or Teferi's Moat. You can also avoid cards like Perish or Plague Spores with a quick switch of color. Four Wild Mongrels will make a fine addition to a Constructed deck. Limited decks should always use the Mongrel, and it should be an early Draft pick (second to fourth).

A Developer's Look at

Odyssey

by Mike Donais

Like all Magic sets, the Odyssey expansion went through a lot of changes during design and development. In R&D, we knew early on that Odyssey would be the graveyard set, but exactly what that meant went through several permutations.

Two of Wizard's best designers, Richard Garfield and Mark Rosewater, worked on this set, so many interesting ideas were proposed. Unfortunately, the set included too many of those good ideas, and when design was done, the set had to be significantly modified to remove several of the major mechanics. Almost all the mechanics in the original set were related to the graveyard or the library (or both). Flashback and threshold were both part of the original design, but at that time the number of cards needed for threshold was ten, rather than the final number of seven.

The original design included a lot more blue cards that put cards from players' libraries into their discard piles, like Millstone does. In fact, early in playtesting, I played a blue deck with a lot of cheap blue creatures that "milled" my opponent when they attacked and weren't blocked. I could often deck my opponents by turn six with this deck. Unfortunately, the Odyssey set was trying to do too many different things, so almost every milling card was cut from the set in an effort to simplify it. The only significant milling card that we kept is Traumatize, which was called "Take It!" during playtesting. Traumatize is pretty cool though, and can be used as a victory condition in blue control decks when the environment allows for it.

Another mechanic that was in the set at the beginning was called "rewind." Rewind put a card from your graveyard on the bottom of your library. It was effectively the reverse of milling. The original design had about fifteen or twenty cards that did that. We removed these cards because the mechanic worked against flashback, making it a lot less interesting to play. We wanted players to get as flashback fairly often as possible and for it to make a difference in those games. The set still has several cards that work against threshold, such as Cabal Inquisitor, Zombie Assassin, and Psychotwitch. The idea was to create situations in which players have to make interesting decisions. Do you retrieve cards from your graveyard now or wait and try to power the powerful threshold cards?

A couple of design decisions that turned out to be fairly interesting when building sealed decks revolved around what blue could and could not do in this set. Blue was determined to be the threshold enabling color. Blue gets a lot of cards that fill up the graveyard quickly and easily, but in exchange it doesn't get any good threshold or flashback cards. We ended up giving blue only one threshold card—Absolute's Desire—and it got that only because it was part of a five-card cycle. During development, we also decided to make the blue flashback cards slightly weaker than the flashback cards in other colors. Unmaskings were especially affected by this decision. Originally, Unmasking was an instant for 4 that returned a [illegible] to its owner's hand. The

flashback was 1U. It was strictly better than Unsummon, and it was extremely good in our "Howling Mine – Static Orb" deck. In fact, it was very good in a lot of different decks. This card was made worse many times in an effort to take it out of Constructed decks. In the end, it was changed to four mana and made a sorcery. It did gain the ability to hit any permanent instead of just a creature, though Fervent Denial is still the best blue flashback card in the set. It's not a bad counterspell, but it's too slow to play in a fast environment.

One of the blue cards that had flashback for a while is Time Stretch. Originally, this card cost eight mana and gave you only one additional turn, plus it cost twelve mana to flashback. We decided that this card could be simplified to just "take two more turns" (with no flashback) and it would still be very exciting to play. We made this change fairly late in development and decided that at ten mana, the card couldn't be too "broken." With almost all fast mana gone from Standard, the card can't be played until fairly late in the game.

This leads me to the card that we called "Stream of Land" during playtesting. New Frontiers costs 3R to play and lets each player put X basic lands into play tapped. This card could possibly power a "Time Stretch" deck if it were built carefully. We built this deck and playtested it quite a bit during *Torment* and *Judgment* development. This is the closest we got to a sixty-card combo deck in *Odyssey* block testing.

In the "Time Stretch" deck, Evasive Action should be replaced with Moment's Peace or Tangle if you expect to face a lot of creature decks. If a good engine card could be found, then that could also replace the permission. The deck improved slightly when I added cards from the *Torment* and *Judgment* expansions, but it still wasn't broken. I worked on this deck a lot because combo decks are easily misjudged by missing only one good combo card. It is very possible that I overlooked a key card, and that when the card is added, the deck will become good enough to win tournaments. The two scary cards in the deck are New Frontiers and Time Stretch—and they're not just scary for your opponents. Playing New Frontiers often let my opponent play Desolation Angel on the next turn and win the game.

One of the crazier decks that we tried was the "Battle of Wits" deck. Battle of Wits is an enchantment that says, "At the beginning of your upkeep, if you have 200 or more cards in your library, you win the game." This card was not designed for tournament play. We wanted to make sure that the card wouldn't show up in serious tournaments in significant numbers because people would have to shuffle the huge decks, and worse yet, I might have to deck-check someone playing this deck. Originally, this card cost only 2UU and required the player to have at least 100 cards in his or her library, but we increased this number to 200 very early on. We had a pretty good blue-black version of a Battle of Wits deck with a lot of cantrips and all the good counterspells and stalling creatures. We also had an early version of Psychatog in that deck—back when you could remove the top ten cards in your library from the game to give it +1/+1. That meant the big deck had both three-mana and four-mana victory conditions. The deck was surprisingly good. Changing the non-black Ashes and increasing the cost of Battle of Wits to 4UU definitely moved this card to a safe place. The deck can still be played and be pretty fun, but against Pro Tour-level decks, the Battle of Wits deck will not do very well. Unfortunately, Battle of Wits will have to be banned in 5 Color (a Magic variant in which everyone has a deck with more than 200 cards) because everyone would play four copies of this card if it were legal.

Time Stretch
R&D Playtest Deck
Nov. 2001 Standard

4 Diligent Farmhand
4 Allied Strategies
1 Death Grasp
4 Evasive Action
1 Fact or Fiction
1 Mana Short
4 New Frontiers
4 Pernicious Deed
4 Restock
4 Time Stretch
4 Worldly Counsel
2 City of Brass
11 Forest
7 Island
1 Mountain
2 Plains
2 Swamp

The best blue-black card in the *Odyssey* set by far is Shadowmage Infiltrator. This is the card that Jon Finkel got to design for winning the Magic Invitational tournament in Australia last year. Whoever wins the Magic Invitational gets to design a card and is featured as a character in its art. Finkel's first design was a Wrath of God variant that cost 4WWU to play and untapped four lands when you played it. After he won, R&D asked for a slightly more balanced card. Shadowmage Infiltrator is like Ophidian or Thieving Magpie because every time it damages your opponent, you can draw a card. Also, Shadowmage Infiltrator can be blocked only by black or artifact creatures, which makes it a great deal for only 1UB. At first, we thought that this would be too good (as most people do when they first see the card). After much testing, though, we decided that it would be very good but not too good. We played several different blue-black decks that took advantage of this card, all of which also included Repulse. We also tested several different versions of the card, including one that let you discard a card from your hand to make Shadowmage Infiltrator untargetable until end of turn.

Mirari is a card that was designed for story reasons. It is an artifact that costs five mana, and when you play a spell you can pay three mana to put a copy of that spell on the stack. When this card came in from design, it didn't require any mana to activate. The development team decided that it was a little too risky like that, so we increased its mana cost to six. The card was still very dangerous in Extended "Tinker" decks, so we added mana to the activation cost and brought the cost back down to five. I feel that this card is pretty safe now, but I wouldn't mind seeing someone find a good use for it. The most obvious use is in a red land destruction deck (could also work well with this card). Mirari doesn't seem very good in a blue control deck because you have to tap out to play it. A card-drawing artifact will often be better. Any cantrips are obviously good with this card and any card that has an additional cost to play works well. Goblin Grenade, for example, could be doubled without having to sacrifice an additional Goblin. Tinker is another card with a sacrifice as part of the cost so it would be a good combo with Mirari. Mirari was never tested in the Time Stretch deck because it seemed a little slow, but if you had enough mana and a Mirari you could take four additional turns from just one Time Stretch.

Overall, the *Odyssey* set has a lot of exciting staple tournament cards like Wild Mongrel, Kamahl, Shadowmage Infiltrator, and Call of the Herd. The *Odyssey* set also has a lot of cool cards players can try to build decks around, like New Frontiers, Time Stretch, Mirari, and Battle of Wits. The *Odyssey* set also has some cards that bring back the flavor of cards that we have enjoyed in the past, like Atogatog and the five new Lhurgoyfs I was worried that the *Invasion* block would be a hard act to follow, but I am pretty happy with how the *Odyssey* set turned out. I hope that everyone else likes it just as much as I do.

Odyssey in Draft

The Apocalypse Is Over. Time for New Beginnings.

by Gary Wise

With the arrival of *Odyssey*, we say goodbye to the *Apocalypse* set and to the insanity of four players per table playing five-color decks, cross-color gold cards, and the idea that a hate draft is not a hate draft but rather a strategic move designed to improve one's deck. The *Odyssey* set is the new beginning of a very long story involving two-color decks, sticking to your colors, and cooperative drafting.

Color intensity seems to be the order of the day in the *Odyssey* set, so get rid of your notions of drafting five colors because it just won't work any more. You'll have to start employing the old tricks of the trade, like cutting off colors, communicating color preferences, and keeping a solid mana base. Weird, huh?

Traditionalists might praise this return to the old ways and new players might find it a little restrictive. The **Magic** game is great because of its ever-changing nature, but after driving ourselves insane trying to figure out how to draft with *Apocalypse* cards, it'll be nice to settle down into some good old-fashioned, two-color decks. Enjoy it while it lasts—you never know what R&D will throw at you next.

BLACK

In a set whose focus is graveyard manipulation, black has to be strong, right? Well, check out the speed that the black cards are capable of. Crypt Creeper and Filthy Cur are both creatures that come out on turn two with equivalent powers, while the uncommon Rotting Giant, a 3/3 for 1 B, acts much like a Barrow Ghoul that gives you options. Black's common removal is cheap as well, with Ghastly Demise and Innocent Blood each at one mana.

The interesting thing about black is that it rewards you for trading card for card. Traditionally, it's been considered smart to avoid making such trades until absolutely necessary. Now, with threshold and flashback telling you to get cards into your graveyard and cards like Painbringer and Zombie Assassin, whose powerful abilities are fueled by removing cards from the graveyard, the old-school black drafter will have to make an about-face in order to excel in this format.

Questions about how to use graveyard resources also arise. With cards like Gravedigger constantly removing cards from the graveyard, it will often be tough to get the seven cards needed to get to threshold. This will probably factor into a lot of drafting decisions when drafting black—with the drafter probably having to choose between threshold cards and graveyard-depleting cards.

Black has a number of powerful uncommons that can stem the tide of any game they're played in. Screams of the Damned—the "new Pestilence"—and Diabolic Tutor are throwback cards that will excite a lot of players and do so even more when the cards are played in Limited. In short, in a set based around the classic black domain of the graveyard, this color won't disappoint.

GREEN

With the world still hung over from the confusing nature of *Invasion* Block Draft, the big question is whether five-color drafting will still be possible. Well, the good news is that there are cards that make drafting more than two colors with a solid mana base possible, but it isn't going to be easy.

Diligent Farmhand is a one mana 1/1 that you can pay 1 G and sacrifice for a Rampant Growth effect so it offers the potential of blocking before it fetches a land, and Deep Reconnaissance is an uncommon that lets you search for a basic land, sometimes twice, but that's about it as far as green's mana diversification goes. Two colors will be the order of the day, three colors occasionally seen.

Though green has been deprived of its colorful charms, it does have a lot going for it. In addition to speed, green brings with it a return to the old in the form of fat creatures. There's Beast Attack, an instant that makes a 4/4 creature, then does it again. There's Gorilla Titan, which can be an 8/8 for five mana if you have a way to clear out your graveyard. And most importantly, there's the return of Overrun, the monstrous sorcery that wins more games than not when it's played.

Green's creatures are larger than all others, as they should be, but they bring a message in the form of multiple green mana in their costs: This is the new beginning. Things are going back to the way they used to be.

RED

The *Invasion* block ended up a little disappointing to the red-burn mage. I mean sure, Magma Burst

Mystic Zealot can be a powerhouse in Limited.

The highly efficient Wild Mongrel.

was as good a common as any in the format, but the most playable nonrare burn spells were Scorching Lava and Assault, and they only dealt 2 damage each. The good news is that the burn-happy mages will get their fill and them some in the *Odyssey* set, to the point where Dave Price himself may become an advocate of the island.

These grotesque burn spells come in all shapes, sizes, and rarities. Thermal Blast, Flame Burst, Firebolt, Blazing Salvo . . . these don't sound like white cards, and they live up to their names. The one that really stands out to me, though, is Shower of Coals, which nukes three creatures of your choice regardless of threshold.

All this burn seeps down through some red creatures, with the 2/1 Barbarian Lunatic capable of throwing itself at something for 2 damage, while Chainflinger strikes out for 1 or 2 per turn, acting as a kind of deranged Prodigal Sorcerer. Unfortunately, most of red's creatures are somewhat anemic, so I'd look for red-green to emerge as a major archetype, with the fast and fat creatures green provides having their path cleared for them by burn.

In addition to weak creatures, red also has the problem of having common and uncommon slots filled by land-destruction spells. These cards would have warranted consideration were they in *Invasion* Block Limited, but they don't stand a main-deck chance here. Beware of colors bearing uselessness: It can be difficult to draft a full deck as a result.

BLUE

Once again, it's blue's job to cajole and manipulate the brain of the opposing player. As per usual, blue has its share of counters, bounce, and larger-than-healthy fliers and again appears very solid as a result.

The fliers are, of course, the showcase pieces of any blue common or uncommon run. This time around, we find that blue has two uncommon 2/3 fliers, Aven Smokechaser and Treetop Sentinel, which have protection from red and protection from green respectively. Also filling an uncommon slot is the tough-to-destroy Balshan Griffin, which returns to its owner's hand in exchange for a one-card discard.

Meanwhile, blue has a number of solid spells that will seem very familiar to long-time players. Repel is very similar to Ether Well. Psionic Gift is a carbon copy of Hermatic Study. Deluge is an awful lot like Ensnare. And all of those originals were great in Limited play. A new card on an old theme, Æther Burst is at first a bad Snap, then a good Withdraw, and then it gets even better. It should be absolutely sick in straight *Odyssey* Draft, where getting a lot of them shouldn't be too hard.

One of the most interesting uncommons in the set is actually an enchant land. Chamber of Manipulation allows you to discard a card to take control of a target creature until end of turn. While the creature doesn't untap or gain haste—meaning it isn't quite as vicious as a Ray of Command effect—the card should still prove interesting with regards to how people play around it. This is where those red land-destruction spells become important, because without them, you're either in trouble or shuffling for the next game.

WHITE

To no one's surprise, white offers the best defense in the set. With this traditionally being the case, R&D had to come up with some real goodies to make this expansion stand out, and they have done just that with the Spheres. I can recall many drafts in which I lost because my opponent played a Circle of Protection, but at least I could outrun the CoPs if my opponent was mana screwed. The Spheres just sit there requiring no maintenance or mana, laughing at you as your band of 2/2s keep attacking for zero.

Of course, this might not be such a problem if white didn't have other outstanding defensive cards as well. Hallowed Healer, the Sanctum Custodian of the set, gets even better than its *Urza's Saga* cousin in the late game by preventing 4 damage to a target of choice once threshold kicks in. Luminous Guardian, meanwhile, can block multiple creatures with a toughness that never seems to end. Good luck getting through.

Some of those good defensive cards also wreak havoc on offense (Aven Archer and Nomad Decoy both come to mind). The Decoy taps a creature like the *Invasion* tappers, but later on starts tapping two creatures a turn, while the Archer holds off both offenses and defenses until it's ready to fly in for the kill.

White's ability to stabilize the ground should work extremely well with blue's countermagic and big fliers. Expect this classic archetype to reemerge with the *Odyssey* set.

THE OTHER STUFF

Well, this stuff isn't too exciting for drafters, aside from the occasional multicolored bomb that can single-handedly wreck your opponents. There are no common artifacts or multicolored cards while the common lands aren't going to affect your drafting too much unless you play too many colors.

That said, there are a few fun cards worth looking at here. Each neighboring color combo has an Atog all its own, with each three mana 1/2 feeding off of two separate resources to give its power, toughness, and self-confidence a boost until the end of the turn. This may not seem that strong, but when you can sacrifice all the cards in your hand or in your graveyard for +1/+1 bumps, it can add up in a hurry.

As far as the artifacts go, if you want to play three colors, the Eggs might go a long way toward helping you. More specialized than the *Invasion* set's Chromatic Sphere, the Eggs give you mana of two friendly colors and replace themselves upon activation. Also, players in blue, white, and green will find Sandstone Deadfall interesting, as it gives creature removal, at a steep price, to those colors which are lacking in it.

So that's about it. As the *Odyssey* set signifies a beginning in the **Magic** storyline, it returns us to the old days of blue flying, white defense, red burn, green fat, and black decay. Expect the classic archetypes to emerge, with red-green beatdown facing off with blue-white control and extremely heavy black decks, at least for the next few months. Good luck with your drafting.

Odyssey Sealed

Is Green Finally the Best Color?

by Brian Kibler

With every new large expansion come many challenges for different types of players. Some players pore over lists looking for cards to add to their favorite decks. Others look for broken cards that may form the basis of a new dominant deck type. A select few glance over the cards sorted by color and remark, "Wow, green will be great in Sealed Deck!" Use the following to gain some insight into what the latter kind of player might have to say about *Odyssey* Limited. With any luck, this info will give you a leg up on the competition when you're cracking packs for the first time.

The first question we must ask ourselves when evaluating a set from the perspective of Limited play is "What defines the environment?" Different blocks have different themes weaved throughout them that impact Limited play far more than Constructed. For *Tempest* block that theme was shadow. Games were often decided by each player's ability to handle this newest form of evasion. Cards like Reality Anchor ({1}{G}, Target creatures loses shadow until end of turn. Draw a card.) not only saw play, but were important to the success of certain draft archetypes. Similarly, the recent *Invasion* Block Limited format was defined by its color themes, both in the cards themselves, like Tidal Visionary and Dead Ringers, as well as in the way the sets encouraged or discouraged allied and opposing color combinations with gold cards. Even the other mechanics in the set, like kicker, felt the effects of this overarching theme, with cards like Probe and Jilt requiring the use of additional colors to reap their full effects.

Perhaps indicative of the world in the wake of the *Apocalypse*, the theme of the *Odyssey* set is clearly the graveyard. Both new mechanics, threshold and flashback, draw on the graveyard as a resource. Many *Odyssey* cards, even without these mechanics, have abilities that refer to the graveyard in various ways, from cards like Bearscape that produce effects by removing cards from the graveyard to the cycle of Kindle-like Bursts (cards that become more powerful the more copies there are in the graveyard). Because of this ubiquitous graveyard interaction, cards that affect the graveyard in seemingly trivial ways, like Ground Seal and Coffin Purge, can, in fact, be quite powerful given the proper selection of cards.

Elephant Ambush is a nasty surprise for your opponent.

You need to keep these themes in mind when designing an *Odyssey* Sealed Deck. In *Odyssey* Limited, it will probably be worth including graveyard manipulation cards simply to deal with your opponent's graveyard effects. Envision *Invasion* Block Sealed Deck if Pyre Zombie was a common. Would you put Cremate in the main deck? While few of the graveyard cards in the *Odyssey* set are quite as game dominating as Pyre Zombie was, the similarities are quite evident. Just as powerful enchantments, like the Embraces and Pestilence, turned Monk Realist into a main-deck card in Urza Block Limited, the predominance of graveyard effects and the threshold and flashback mechanics cause the same to be true of graveyard manipulation cards in *Odyssey* Limited.

It will be interesting to see the effect of threshold and flashback on the Limited environment. Both mechanics have the potential to produce extremely powerful effects. With their flashback abilities, cards like Call of the Herd, Elephant Ambush, Morbid Hunger, and Firebolt, all quite effective spells in their own right, simply enhance their usefulness. Some threshold cards are absolutely absurd when the threshold requirement is met, but extremely inefficient until that point, such as Krosan Beast, which balloons from a 1/1 for {3}{G} to an 8/8 for the same cost. Others, such as Metamorphic Wurm, are only somewhat overcosted for their pre-threshold abilities (3/3 for {3}{G}{G}), but become similarly enormous when threshold is attained.

The interaction between these two mechanics is clearly not synergistic and

will lead to a number of interesting strategic decisions. Is it worth waiting to flashback your Call of the Herd so you'll hit threshold for your Metamorphic Wurm? Or is it more important to have another 3/3 creature right now rather than a 7/7 after you play a few more cards? Should you trade your creatures in combat so your Nomad Decoy gets more powerful, or is it not worth the risk in case your opponent has a removal spell? This is only the tip of the proverbial iceberg as far as the interaction between these mechanics goes. Players will have to learn to be mindful of not only the cards in play at all times, but of the types of cards—and even the number of cards—in graveyards, as well. Timing will become more important than ever. More than one combat will come down to who plays Muscle Burst second.

Flame Burst and Pardic Firecat work well together.

Having all the graveyard tricks in the world won't win you a game in Sealed Deck, though. What Limited truly comes down to is creatures, and in the *Odyssey* set, good creatures are at a premium. Because of this, for what may be the first time in the history of Limited, green is in the running for the best color in the set. Common cards define a block in Limited because they are the cards most likely to be seen in any given pack, and more than anything else, common creatures and common creature removal spells or tricks are what make or break a color.

With the average common creatures in other colors weighing in as Gray Ogres (2/2s for three mana), green's common creatures are enormous. Springing Tiger, which in any other set would simply be considered another Hill Giant (a 3/3 for four mana), is an absolute monster even without hitting threshold, standing head and shoulders above the rest of the field. The Tiger is only the beginning, as cards like Elephant Ambush and Muscle Burst further solidify green as the master of the Red Zone. Even among only its commons, green can assemble a powerful mana curve: from Wild Mongrel at two mana to Krosan Avenger at three, and the Tiger at four, topping off with Rabid Elephant at five.

This is even more significant due to the lack of a common "Dark Banishing" effect in the set, the kind of spell that has plagued green mages in Limited since the dawn of the format. The closest is Ghastly Demise. Unsurprisingly enough, given the *Odyssey* set's theme, it has a graveyard-based restriction on its use, so it cannot be used as effectively as an early-game tempo card as previous incarnations. This is not to say that black is without its powerful removal effects, however. Black remains the undisputed king of creature control, with the common removal spells Afflict, Ghastly Demise, and Patriarch's Desire, as well as creatures like Zombie Assassin, which double's as a removal.

Along these lines, the *Odyssey* set is perhaps the best set in recent memory in sticking with the themes of each color. Green is the creature color, and lo and behold, its creatures are far and beyond the best, as far as commons are concerned. Black is creature destruction, and red is just destruction in general (there are more common damage spells in red than you can shake a stick at). Blue is the color of manipulation and flying, and that's what virtually every one of its commons does. White is protection, prevention, and enchantment, which is embodied in its commons like Auramancer and Hallowed Healer. All of this, of course, is wrapped up in the graveyard theme of the set, with blue's manipulation often being of the draw and discard sort, and many cards in all of the colors drawing upon the graveyard as a resource to activate their abilities.

Hallowed Healer is one of the best white commons in Limited

What does this mean for playing *Odyssey* Block Limited? Well, for one, it probably means that the vast majority of sealed decks will include green, if only for its vastly superior creatures. Much like blue-black-red was the standard for *Invasion* Block Sealed, it seems that green may become the ubiquitous color in *Odyssey* Sealed. Unlike the *Invasion* block, however, there is no allied or opposing colored theme to railroad sealed decks into certain color combinations to use your most powerful cards, or even occasionally simply to have enough solid cards to build a deck. So even if the majority of builds include green, we are much less likely to see the sort of automatic color pattern that we experienced in the *Invasion* block.

It would seem that this is the changing of the guard. It comes with the rotation of every new block, but its effects are felt nowhere more poignantly than in Limited. Everything changes, and everything needs to be relearned. This is one of the great times to be a **Magic** player, when everything is in flux and all it takes is a few insightful observations to vault yourself from the Qualifier circuit to the Pro Tour. I hope this will serve as a useful primer to those of you trying to qualify for Pro Tour–San Diego. Maybe you'll find some things that I haven't even noticed yet. The Pro Tour is waiting for you.

Odyssey Standard Deck

Squirrels Make a Comeback

by Brian Kibler

The first **Magic** Squirrels weren't actually Squirrels at all. Waiting in the Weeds, a *Mirage* card, originally put Squirrel tokens into play equal to the number of untapped forests each player controlled; however, the very unsquirrel-like artwork mandated a redesign so the card wound up creating Cat tokens instead. Since this slight, Squirrels have been on the warpath. Deranged Hermit led the charge in Urza block, when "Squirrel Prison" was all the rage. "Angry Hermit" continued the uprising, winning multiple National and Continental Championships. The Squirrel rebellion seemed to have calmed down a bit of late, but the *Odyssey* set stands to heat it up once again. With Opposition back in Standard, players are sure to find themselves having nightmares of squirrel hordes soon enough.

With Masques block rotating out, gone are the days of Ramosian Sergeant and Lin Sivvi calling up armies of rebels from your deck; of pecking away with Spiketail Hatchling and Rishadan Airship while you Thwart and Foil all your opponent's defenses; and of Saproling tokens swinging for 12 the moment they come into play. Gone are the days of hiding behind a Story Circle, slowly milling your opponent's library to nothing. The day of the Squirrel has come!"

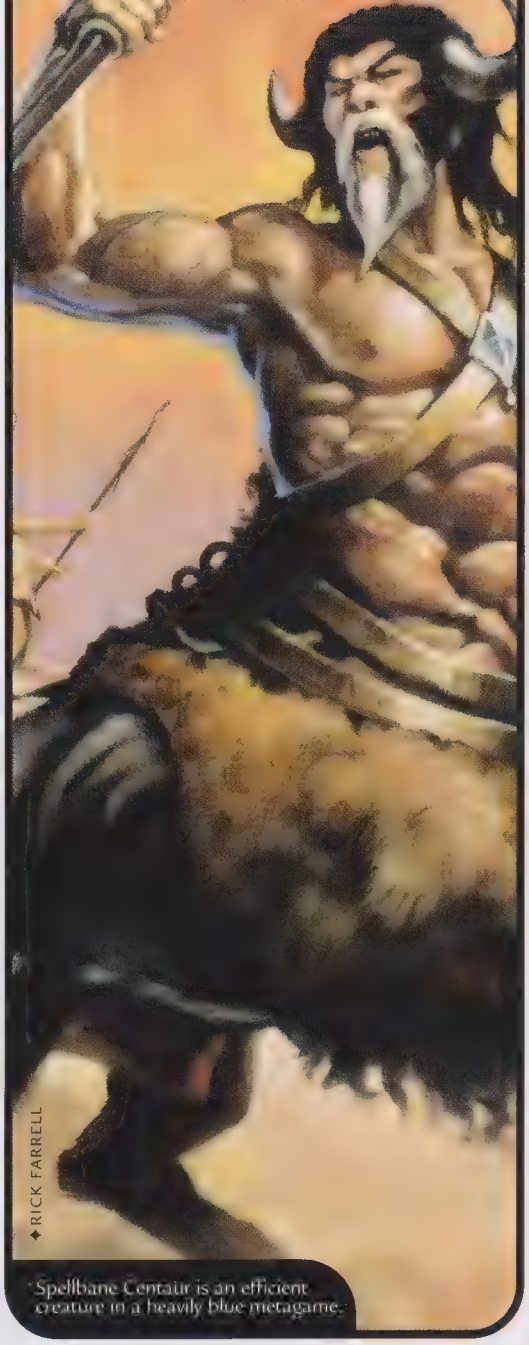
The key to this new world order? The card that will doubtless be heralded as "the new Kjeldoran Outpost" the moment the spoiler list hits the Net: Squirrel Nest. At 1 ●●, this seemingly innocuous little enchant land can produce armies of angry Squirrels to tear your opponent limb from limb with their tiny claws. Or it can lock down every last permanent your opponent controls with Opposition. Or you could just sit back, relax, and counter all of your opponent's threats, pumping out legions of tiny warriors all the while. "Counter-Nest"? We shall see.

Let's look at the possibilities for Squirrel Prison Revisited. As so much in the *Odyssey* set is focused on the graveyard mechanics, there isn't as much to include from the new set as we might like. That's of little concern to us because between *Seventh Edition* and *Invasion* block, we already have just about everything we need for the prison part of the deck. The *Odyssey* set just gives us the Squirrels (and the occasional Elephant).

Simple, streamlined, and fairly self-explanatory, this newest incarnation of Squirrel Prison is an aggro-control player's dream. Fast efficient creatures, card advantage, and board control—what more can you hope for?

The Llanowar Elves and Birds of Paradise are virtually a given—they are two of the most powerful cards in the Standard environment. Before the Masques block rotation, the power granted by their mana acceleration was rivaled by only the alternative cost counterspells, Thwart and Foil, for sheer rule-breaking potential. In an aggro-control deck like this one, outstripping your opponent's mana resources is extremely powerful, as it allows you to establish an offense and protect it before they can settle into his or her defense. In an Opposition-based deck, Elves and Birds become even more powerful, as once they've outlived their usefulness as mana producers, they turn into pint-sized Icy Manipulators, contributing to the total lock-down of the opponent's permanents.

Before this event arises, however, or in the case that it doesn't come about, you need to be able to put some pressure on your opponent. This is where Call of the Herd's Elephant tokens and Spellbane Centaur come in. These 3-power creatures for three mana form the core of your offense, coming down on turn two with the help of a Bird or Elf. Their secondary effects aren't incidental, either. Call of the Herd's flashback ability gives you a quick offense from an investment of just a few cards and a powerful way to recover from board-sweeping effects, such as Wrath of God and Pernicious Deed. Spellbane Centaur's ability wards off Repulse, Persuasion (the *Odyssey* Control Magic), and even the effects of your opponent's Opposition.



Spellbane Centaur is an efficient creature in a heavily blue metagame.

In the four-mana slot on the curve sits Jade Leech, Blastoderm's greedier, yet more reliable cousin. With the untargetable *Nemesis* Beast having gone the way of the dodo, Jade Leech steps up quite readily to take its place. At 5/5, the Leech is just as large as Blastoderm and, unlike his lazy brethren, sticks around long enough to finish the job. This is particularly important in a deck such as this, in which every creature is integral to the functioning of

Call of the Herd is cost-effective and powerful.

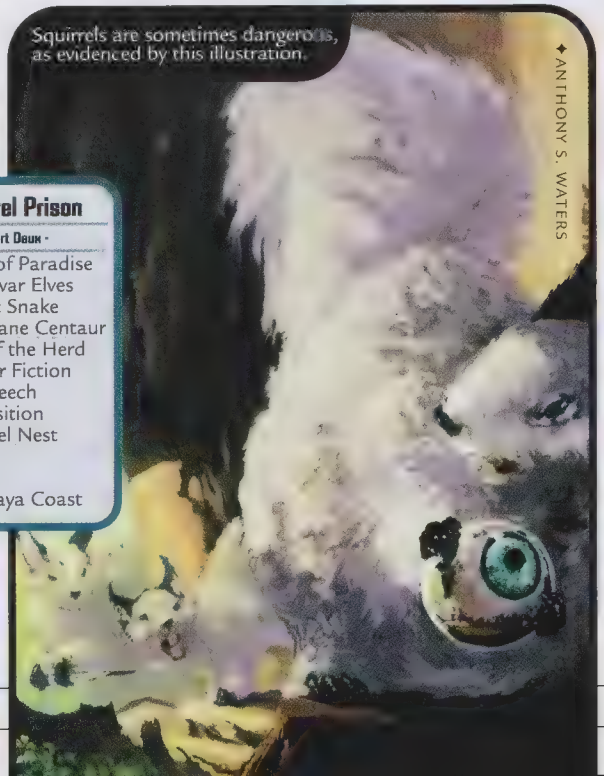
Opposition. With games much less likely to be decided by turn five—the exit of Saproling Burst takes a bite out of the hide of "Fires" decks—this late game potential stands to pay off in spades.

The deck's late game is further bolstered by Mystic Snake, which gives the deck a form of countermagic and also has great synergy with Opposition. Fact or Fiction refills your hand, allowing you to maintain pressure against control decks and overwhelm other creature decks even trading just one for one. It also lets you dig for key cards to piece together the puzzle of your combo.

Clearly, this combo is Squirrel Nest and Opposition. The power of Opposition, particularly in concert with cards that quickly generate large numbers of creatures, has long been known to tournament players. The last Squirrel generator, Deranged Hermit, saw to the rise of the Opposition decks that virtually dominated Urza Block Constructed. The Spontaneous Generation–based "Saproling Burt" deck didn't place anyone in the Top 8 of U.S. Nationals this year, but it did post a solid record and showed that this style of Opposition deck is still a viable possibility. And at this year's APAC Championship, Satoshi Nakamura piloted an aggro-control green-blue Opposition deck to a Top 8 finish before his unfortunate disqualification.

Many of the tools are different now. The rotation of Masques block out of Standard makes Gush, Blastoderm, Silt Crawler, and Chimeric Idol unavailable, but the rest of the field must adapt to these changes as well. The departure of cards such as Story Circle removes design constraints that would otherwise weaken a build such as this, requiring otherwise suboptimal cards to take up space in the main deck. Other cards that independently generate large numbers of permanents from a single initial investment, such as Saproling Burst or any of the Rebel searchers, have vanished from the face of Standard, making a card like Opposition much more powerful when combined with the few effects of this type remaining.

While the aggro-control potential of Opposition is clear—Opposition clears the way for your creatures to swing—the true power of the card in this deck lies in its synergy with the Squirrels. Squirrel Nest pumps out an endless stream of 1/1 tokens to do your bidding. While these creatures can swarm your opponent tooth and claw, they are better used to nullify all of your opponent's permanents. Much like Deranged Hermit, Squirrel Nest quickly produces a mass of Squirrels that can be used to tap down your opponent's lands and creatures, effectively locking your opponent in a few turns, and it's a threat in and of itself: If not dealt with, it will create a horde of token creatures that will slowly eat away at your opponent's life total.



Squirrels are sometimes dangerous, as evidenced by this illustration.

✦ ANTHONY S. WATERS

Squirrel Prison

- Part Deux -

4	Birds of Paradise
4	Llanowar Elves
4	Mystic Snake
4	Spellbane Centaur
4	Call of the Herd
4	Fact or Fiction
4	Jade Leech
4	Opposition
4	Squirrel Nest
10	Forest
10	Island
4	Yavimaya Coast

Unlike the Hermit, and much like the Kjeldoran Outpost of old, Squirrel Nest has to be dealt with independently of the creatures it creates. That is, even if you get rid of the Squirrels, whether it be via Wrath of God or Pyroclasm, and so on, you still have to contend with their source. The fact that the Nest can be used the turn it comes into play means that even if your opponents are able to deal with it immediately, they still have to contend with the token creatures it creates. This can be a form of card advantage all its own, forcing your opponent to use multiple cards to deal with the Nest and the Squirrels themselves. Against decks with land destruction, the Nest must be played with care, as it gives your opponent a similar opportunity to use one card to take out two of yours.

Card advantage theory aside, Squirrel Nest is simply a good card. If it isn't dealt with quickly, the number of token creatures it can produce can very easily get out of hand. As it doesn't cost any mana to activate, you can continue to play threats while the Nest is pumping out Squirrels or even play two or three Nests at once to populate your world with Squirrels all the more quickly. Some can attack while others stay back to chump block incoming Jade Leeches and Spiritmongers, or you can simply build up a massive army and swarm your opponent in a single turn. It can be an aggressive card or a control card or a little bit of both—or the cornerstone of your Opposition combo.

The possibilities are nearly endless. The rotation of a large expansion into the Standard environment always breaks the metagame wide open, and the most innovative and insightful deck designers will be rewarded. Try out Squirrel Prison. Pull some cards, test out some others. With a lot of effort and a bit of luck, maybe you'll discover the next big thing. Until then, have fun with the *Odyssey* set. I know I certainly will.

Extended Tech

by Jeff Donais

Welcome to the first installment of Sideboard magazine's newest feature, Extended Tech. Each month we will feature a competitive Extended deck, complete with sideboard and variations for the deck. For our first deck, we feature a traditional favorite, "Sligh". Sligh decks have evolved over the years as finely tuned instruments of victory and are enjoyable to play.

Sligh

Extended Sligh

4 Ball Lightning
4 Jackal Pup
4 Mogg Fanatic
2 Viashino Sandstalker
4 Cursed Scroll
4 Fireblast
2 Hammer of Bogardan
4 Incinerate
2 Price of Progress
4 Shock
2 Urza's Rage
2 Barbarian Ring
2 Ghitu Encampment
16 Mountain
4 Wasteland

Sideboard

4 Anarchy
2 Flametongue Kavu
2 Price of Progress
4 Pyroblast
3 Pyrokinesis

The most abusive spell in the deck, Fireblast was once almost banned from tournament play because of its brutal efficiency.

You may sacrifice two mountains instead of paying Fireblast's casting cost
Fireblast deals 4 damage to target creature or player
Ember mages aren't well known for their diplomatic skills.

Incinerate deals 3 damage to target creature or player. A creature damaged by Incinerate cannot regenerate this turn.
"Never taunt an embermage. What a way to do about it?"
—Arin, scorned suitor

Hammer of Bogardan deals 3 damage to target creature or player
2 Return Hammer of Bogardan to your hand. Use this ability only during your upkeep and only if Hammer of Bogardan is in your graveyard

Price of Progress deals 2 damage to each player for each nonbasic land he or she controls.
Man versus nature is not a fair fight.

With the extraordinary number of nonbasic lands in Extended, Price of Progress has potential to do massive damage.

Artifact
3, Name a card. Target opponent chooses a card at random from your hand. If he or she chooses the named card, Cursed Scroll deals 2 damage to target creature or player
Illus. D. Alexander Gregory

Cursed Scrolls provide reusable, colorless damage that is useful for eliminating opponents' creatures or finishing off the opponent if the game goes long.

Kicker
You may put an additional
onto the spell.
Urza's Rage can't be countered by spells or abilities.
Urza's Rage deals 3 damage to target creature or player. If you paid the kicker cost, instead Urza's Rage deals 10 damage to that creature or player and the damage can't be prevented.

Four more varieties of burn spells round out the selection and ensure maximum flexibility and power.

Not only are these creatures mana efficient, but they also reduce the advantage gained from Oath of Druids and Wrath of God. Mogg Fanatics can be used to eliminate opponents' mana creatures, and Ball Lightning packs a huge punch on the third turn.

For each 1 damage dealt to Jackal Pup, it deals 1 damage to you.
The first morning after acquiring her familiar, the wizard awoke with fleabites and mange

One of the best 1-mana creatures ever created, Jackal Pup is a must for any aggressive red deck.

Viashino Sandstalker is unaffected by summoning sickness.
At the end of any turn, return Viashino Sandstalker to owner's hand
"Some beasts, Sandstalkers here to be, treasures most of all, scars mean better."
—Zhalfirin Guide to the Desert

Sixteen mountains is the minimum amount that should be played to ensure a third turn Ball Lightning and sacrifice fodder for Fireblast.

In an environment full of dual lands, Wastelands are a must.

Barbarian Ring adds colorless direct damage in the late game. Reaching threshold should not be a problem with all the direct damage and Ball Lightnings in this deck.

These get around Wrath of God and Oath of Druids and are immune to counterspells.

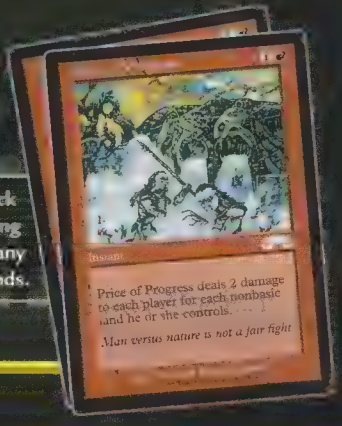
VARIATIONS

1. If "Oath" decks are not popular in your area, you can replace the Ghitu Encampments and Viashino Sandstalkers with two mountains and two Goblin Patrols.
2. If burn decks are popular in your area, Bottle Gnomes can be added to the sideboard. They can also help against "Donate-Illusions" decks.
3. For more antienchantment power, replace four lands with Taiga and replace four sideboard cards with Emerald Charms.
4. To fight recursion decks, use Phyrexian Furnace in your sideboard.

SIDEBOARD

Very efficient against blue decks.

Bring your main deck total to four when playing against decks with many nonbasic lands.



Use against weenie decks, including other Sligh decks. Effective versus Elves and Birds.

Use against creature-heavy decks.

Useful against white weenie decks and other dangerous white cards, including Circle of Protection: Red, Sanctimony, and Warmth.

Odyssey's Odyssey

The Evolution of a New World

by Mark Rosewater

In the beginning, Odyssey *was all about milling.*
Of course, in the beginning, Tempest *was all about poison—so as you will see, things changed.*

Odyssey design began over a year ago in the spring of 2000. *Invasion* was on its way to the printer, and *Planeshift* and *Apocalypse* development were in full swing. While I had done extensive work on *Invasion*, *Odyssey* was the first chance I'd had to serve as lead designer of a large expansion since the *Tempest* set.

My design team was an eclectic mix of R&D members: Henry Stern, William Jockusch, Mike Donais, and Richard Garfield. Each member was chosen for a different set of skills. I had worked extensively with both Henry and William in development but had never had the pleasure of doing design with either. Mike was a new addition to R&D who I felt had real potential as a designer. Finally, Richard had mentioned that he had enjoyed working with me on *Tempest* design and was eager to try his hand at another **Magic** set. Who was I to turn down the opportunity to work again with Richard?

We started *Odyssey* design by trying to determine a theme for the block. One area that interests me is alternative win conditions. (I'm responsible for The Cheese Stands Alone, Celestial Convergence, and Coalition Victory.) I began design with the following question: Could we build an entire block around an alternative win condition?

After exploring many possibilities, both new and old, the team came to the conclusion that milling had never been thoroughly explored, and running your opponent out of cards seemed to have the most potential as an alternative win condition. The *Odyssey* block, we decided, would revolve around milling.

In the past, most decks that used milling as a win condition were slow control decks, often monoblue or blue-white, or were speedy combo decks, such as "Academy." We wanted to try to create a different style of milling deck, one that used milling aggressively but still provided for interaction with the other player. To accomplish this, we designed a number of very aggressive blue and artifact milling cards. The next obstacle to overcome was the threat of milling games being "all or nothing." We wanted to design cards that would allow even the milling of a single card to have an impact.

This led to most of our major mechanics. The first mechanic, flashback, was one I came up while watching Pro Tour feature matches. In important games, players spend a lot of time looking at one another's graveyards. They do this to see what spells have been used and to deduce which cards remain in their opponents' libraries. It dawned on me that it might be cool to have a mechanic that made cards in players' graveyards matter simply because they were in their graveyards.

This led to the idea of spells that could be played directly from a player's graveyard. I originally called the spells "two-fers" because they allowed a player to use them twice. The two-fers were a perfect fit because they created an interesting tension with milling. Each time you milled your opponent, you risked giving him or her extra cards to play.

The second mechanic, called threshold, was created by Richard. Richard liked the idea of cards that changed when some condition was met. Unlike previous mechanics, which affected only individual cards, threshold would result in numerous cards changing at the same time. To interact with milling, Richard chose to use the graveyard as the gauge. Like flashback, threshold created tension with milling.

The team was very prolific and created numerous other mechanics, including:

- costs that removed cards on the top of a player's library from the game;
- "negative milling," which moved cards from players' graveyards to the bottoms of their libraries; and
- a race of creatures that milled opponents whenever the creatures dealt damage.

After its first pass, the team had layered about thirty different mechanics into the set. With each playtest pass, we would further focus the set by stripping out the weakest mechanics. By the time we turned over the set to development, we had reduced the number of mechanics significantly. Unfortunately, we had not reduced it enough. Development would later remove numerous mechanics from the set, including milling, which was the very mechanic the set had first been built around. For further explanation, see Mike Donais's article on *Odyssey* development on page 44.

Join me next issue when I will explore some of the many other facets of *Odyssey* design.

Traumatize (playtest name "Take It!") was a key card in the milling deck.
Prodigal Mage
2U
Prodigal Mage
Argon
CU11 -
Creature - Wizard
T: CARDNAME deals 1 damage to target creature.
T: Target puts the top two cards of his or her library into his or her graveyard
1/1
Rumbling Wurm
4GG
Rumbling Wurm
CG04
Creature - Wurm
Trample
When CARDNAME comes into play, put five cards from your graveyard on the bottom of your library or sacrifice CARDNAME.
Threshold: CARDNAME gets +3/+0.
V1.6 ©2000WotC
5/5
Charmed Herbalist
W
Charmed Herbalist
CW12 -
Argon
Creature - Cleric
T, Put a card in your graveyard on the bottom of your library: Gain 1 life.
V1.6 ©2000WotC
1/1

Vindication!

Apocalypse Stays Strong

by Alex Shvartsman

It has now been quite some time since Apocalypse *first hit the streets, and it is still the talk of the town. The set has proven to be excellent as far as traders and collectors are concerned—there are plenty of choice rares, and even many of the "bad" rares are still pretty good, such as the Volvers. So let us update which* Apocalypse *cards are being traded these days.*

Spiritmonger and Vindicate are the two hottest *Apocalypse* singles, both trading anywhere between $6–12. Even at $12, it is difficult to collect four of each, as most other players also want to make sure they have four in their arsenals. Second in popularity, if not value, are the five enemy-color pain lands. Trading anywhere between $3–8, these cards are highly desirable for decks—with Shivan Reef and Yavimaya Coast leading the pack. A number of excellent creatures are also highly traded. Among those are Spectral Lynx and Desolation Angel—both can be had from about $3–6. Last but not least is Prophetic Bolt. The cost of dealing 4 damage and drawing another card is at about $3–7 these days.

Honorable mention goes to some of the other popular *Apocalypse* cards: Mystic Snake, Death Grasp, and Lightning Angel. Gerrard Capashen and Cromat are two cards that actually went down in value a little since the set's initial release, mostly because players have not yet found ways to use them in current decks.

In other news, Birds of Paradise is back down from the crazy price hike it was on. With "Fires" decks running rampant, you had to give up about $12–16 in trade value to get your hands on a mana Bird this summer. With the *Apocalypse* set throwing so many more decks into the mix and somewhat drawing attention away from the Fires archetype, Birds is now trading at around $7–12: a bit higher than it was valued six months ago, but perfectly reasonable considering the card's importance in Constructed.

On the upswing are most of the *Invasion* block rares. Cards like Dromar, the Banisher; Blazing Specter; and Fact or Fiction have slightly gone up in value because tournament players are building decks for and competing in *Invasion* Block Constructed Qualifiers. A wide range of viable decks ensures that most of the better rares are traded for and used during the tournaments.

— Alex's Power 9 —

The cards that are currently in the highest trading demand.

1

The most-traded-for *Apocalypse* card is on everyone's wish list.

2

Urza's Rage can't be countered by spells or abilities.
Urza's Rage deals 3 damage to target creature or player. If you paid the kicker cost, instead Urza's Rage deals 10 damage to that creature or player and the damage can't be prevented.

Always in demand, Rage became even more so with post- *Apocalypse* archetypes.

3

Declining in price as Fires declines in popularity. Still the hottest card in *Seventh Edition*.

4

Whenever Spiritmonger deals damage to a creature, put a +1/+1 counter on Spiritmonger.
: Regenerate Spiritmonger.
: Spiritmonger becomes the color of your choice until end of turn.

The hottest fattie around.

5

Enemy-color pain lands had a big impact on the Worlds metagame.

6

The original pain lands are still very popular

7

Control decks are more popular than ever, and Absorb is one of the best counters around.

8

Each creature gets +1/+1 for each other creature in play that shares a creature type with it. (For example, if there are three Goblins in play, each gets +2/+2.)

Coat of Arms is even more popular after Worlds. It is a good answer to Plague Spitter in a Saproling-Opposition deck.

9

X, Sacrifice Pernicious Deed: Destroy each artifact, creature, and enchantment with converted mana cost X or less.
"Yawgmoth," Freyalise whispered as she set the bomb, "now you will pay for your treachery."

The "New Disk" is finding its way into many decks

DCI Global Rankings

This section highlights the top ten ranked players from each country. It uses DCI Composite ratings, which are the averages of the players' Limited and Constructed ratings. Only countries that have at least ten players with Composite ratings are included. The number of sanctioned matches that each person has played is also included. DCI ratings are updated every week on Tuesday night, Pacific Time. Wednesday morning is the best time to view updated ratings.

These ratings are from Wednesday, August 22, 2001. For the most updated ratings and rankings, visit www.thedci.com.

Argentina

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Diego Ostrovich	Buenos Aires	1902	818
2	Andres Werner	Buenos Aires	1902	417
3	Santiago Guzzetti	Buenos Aires	1893	118
4	Adrian Saredo	Buenos Aires	1884	318
4	Matias Bollati	Cordoba	1884	198
4	Alejandro del Gerbo Actis	Rosario	1884	744
7	Ernesto Mingorance	Buenos aires	1877	288
8	Douglas Maioli	Buenos Aires	1866	453
9	Matias Gabrenja	Buenos Aires	1864	318
10	Gustavo del Gerbo Actis	Rosario	1857	702

Australia

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Michael T Doecke	Adelaide	1920	818
2	Wei Ren W Khoo	Toowong	1900	262
3	Joe Connolly	North Melbourne	1896	251
4	Andrew D Gordon	Eltham	1892	301
5	Rob Nadebaum	East St Kilda	1880	211
6	Kim B Brebach	Sydney	1875	619
7	Pang Ming Wei	Tasmania	1870	347
8	Chris D Kwan	Brisbane	1867	366
8	Shun Jiang	Victoria	1867	188
10	Ben Seck	Sydney	1865	1198

Austria

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Benedikt Klauser	Vienna	2000	818
2	Markus Joebstl	Perg	1992	612
3	Philip Reich	Vienna	1977	179
4	Helmut Sommersberger	Salzburg	1909	534
5	Thomas Preyer	Vienna	1887	418
6	Erwin K Cetl	Vienna	1883	490
7	Philipp Cetl	Vienna	1877	183
8	Alexander Proschofsky	Wien	1863	453
9	Stephan Geiser	Salzburg	1839	118
10	Christoph Derdak	Wien	1836	427

Belgium

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Gert G Coeckelbergh	Leuven	1965	748
2	Peter Je Gysemans	Leuven	1942	543
3	Mathys Luts	Brussels	1871	117
4	Ben Possemiers	Antwerpen	1862	881
5	Dominique Coene	Heverlee	1850	421
6	Jan Doise	Herent	1848	627
7	Bernardo Cabral	Brussels	1844	289
8	Evan Van Lissum	Strombeek	1841	295
9	Frederick Ongena	Leuven	1835	891
9	Sinan Bolca	Sint-Niklaas	1834	204

Brazil

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Carlos E Romão	Rio de Janeiro	1939	823
2	Daniel Brasil	Rio de Janeiro	1899	173
3	Ricardo M de Barros	Rio de Janeiro	1885	98
4	Rafael A Alvarenga	Rio de Janeiro	1880	511
5	Eduardo Liboni Sella	Rio de Janeiro	1874	139
6	Victor U Galimbertti	São Paulo	1870	366
7	Eduardo Teixeira	Brasília	1868	108
8	Christiano M Pereira	Rio de Janeiro	1868	275
9	Walter Lacorraca	Rio de Janeiro	1855	211
10	Julio C Silva Maciel	Rio de Janeiro	1854	285
10	Willy Edel	Rio de Janeiro	1854	104

Canada

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Gabriel Tsang	Toronto	2019	1116
2	Louis A Boileau	Brossard	2016	394
3	Terry J Tsang	Toronto	2003	947
4	Ryan C Fuller	Burnaby	1972	1168
5	Michael W Gurney	Port Moody	1960	1111
6	Jeff W Cunningham	Vancouver	1956	591
7	Mike Handfield I	Edmonton	1950	1935
8	Sam Lount	Winnipeg	1948	706
9	Matthew Viennneau	Toronto	1947	1135
10	J Gary Wise	Willowdale	1939	894

Chile

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Juan L Reutter	Santiago	1841	218
2	Andres Camargo	Santiago	1837	261
3	Rodrigo Sánchez Albert	Santiago	1834	186
4	Carlos H Huarapil	Santiago	1830	243
4	Sebastian Suter	Santiago	1830	211
6	Carlos Olate	Santiago	1829	195
7	Maximiliano Cereceda	Santiago	1823	198
7	Rafael A Le Saux	Santiago	1822	322
9	Andres P Hoyman	Santiago	1811	236
10	Jose Zegarra	Santiago	1794	103

China

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Liang Zhang	Shanghai	1771	81
2	Wang Z Chen	Shanghai	1760	158
3	Ning Zhang	Beijing	1741	98
4	Wen Zhang	Beijing	1735	124
5	Jian Wang	Zhengzhou	1721	141
6	Xi J Hua	Shanghai	1714	80
7	Jiang Bo	Beijing	1711	181
8	Yang Zhang	Beijing	1705	66
9	Jun Cai	Shanghai	1706	111
10	Shuang Liang	Beijing	1702	78

Croatia

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Denis O Zagmester	Zagreb	1923	262
2	Saja Zorc	Zagreb	1874	406
3	Danijel Pajur	Zagreb	1870	215
4	Ivan Rubelj	Zagreb	1844	505
5	Ivan Solaja	Zagreb	1832	359
6	Luka Gasparac M.D.	Zagreb	1830	313
7	Ladislav Zupancic	Zagreb	1811	171
8	Damir Simpovic	Zagreb	1805	156
9	Igor Haraja	Zagreb	1803	112
9	Goran Pivac	Zagreb	1803	249

Czech Republic

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Ondrej Basche	Hlinsko	1949	96
2	Jakub Slemr	Prague	1905	1056
3	Petr Nahodil	Brno	1882	318
4	David Korejtko	Zdar	1880	269
5	Arnost Zidek	Ceska Lipa	1866	466
6	Jan Brodzák	Ostrava	1874	510
7	Mirko Nyvlt	Doudleby nad Orlic	1863	195
8	Michal Marcik	Brno	1861	653
9	Michal Srba	Kromeriz	1849	118
10	Ivan Stanoev	Brno	1847	662

Denmark

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Svend S Geertsen	Copenhagen	2007	870
2	Trey M Van Cleave	Herning	1970	848
3	Lars Dam	Copenhagen	1911	409
4	Daniel S Bertelesen	Randers	1952	359
5	Niels S Jensen	Randers	1944	346
6	Thomas Qvist	Herning	1901	123
7	Rune Espenhein	Copenhagen	1880	130
8	Allan B Christensen	Aalborg	1879	467
9	Frederik Fassington	Copenhagen	1875	443
9	Jan Sorensen	Randers	1875	444

England

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	John Ormerod	Surrey	2089	1096
2	Neil Rigby	Chadderton	1935	930
3	Ryan Sieng Huat Soh	Isleworth	1908	296
4	Scott A Wills	Wellingborough	1904	1247
5	David Grant	Surrey	1903	429
6	Oliver Schneider	London	1899	1492
7	Daniel Nuttall	Bury St Edmunds	1895	461
8	Daniel Paskins	London	1894	676
9	Tony Adams	Isle of Wight	1892	635
10	Ben Ronaldson	Surrey	1889	527

Estonia

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Number
1	Martti Lauri	Tartu	1775	183
2	Margus Liiber	Tartu	1746	186
3	Tanel T Lumiste I	Kohtla-Järve	1730	183
4	Kalvo Nienlaup	Kohtla-Järve	1720	149
5	Kaarel Isak	Tartu	1677	48
6	Veljo Hagu	Tartu	1666	153
7	Risto Aaver	Tartu	1662	115
8	Mart Pechter	Tartu	1648	137
8	Lauri Eidermann	Tartu	1648	98
10	Lauri Lemming	Tartu	1644	92

Finland

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Number
1	Tomas A Eriksson	Helsinki	2000	411
2	Aarni Puurula	Kerava	1987	218
3	Arto A Hiltunen	Helsinki	1969	414
4	Tomi A Walamies	Kauniainen	1958	1030
5	Tuomo Nieminen	Vantaa	1937	98
6	Mike P Wall	Helsinki	1930	202
7	Irmo Ekebom	Vantaa	1919	324
8	Mikko Snygg	Espoo	1914	642
9	Juuso Perala	Vantaa	1911	96
10	Toni P Brusaren	Selki	1897	321

France

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Number
1	Antoine Ruel	Saint-Germain	2086	1168
2	Pierre Malherbaud	Paris	2043	1284
3	Franck Canu	Lyon	2037	1776
4	Farid Meraghni	Vitry-sur-Seine	1993	1051
5	Yann Hamon	Lannion	1966	488
6	Nicolas Labarre	Rennes	1939	346
7	Antoine Menard	Lyon	1924	118
8	Gerard Garcia	Paris	1920	538
9	Lucien Bui	Châtenay	1896	33
10	Eric Vinh	Pelassac	1933	514
10	Nicolas Olivieri	Lyon	1933	33

Germany

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Number
1	Kai M Budde	Hamburg	2042	1334
2	Patrick Mello	Hamburg	2015	1095
3	Daniel Zink	Köln	2010	443
4	Markus Bell	Köln	1992	752
5	Mario Zemke	Chemnitz	1982	481
6	David Brucker	München	1970	532
7	Christoph A Lippert	Mülheim	1969	431
8	Wolfgang Rudi Eder	Wernham	1957	982
9	André O Delere	Kornwestheim	1941	481
10	Christian Libis	Bendestorf	1936	874

Greece

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Number
1	Dimitris Aperghis	Chalandri	1939	414
2	Georgios Kapalas	Kipseli	1899	336
3	Giannis Angelakis	Iraklio	1881	175
4	Emmanouil I Nanos Sr	Pefki	1831	125
5	Panajotis Zacharias	Athens	1804	113
6	Nikolaos Konstantakis	Thessaloniki	1799	141
7	Alex Bakopoulos	Thessaloniki	1786	261
8	John Filippidis	Thessaloniki	1782	183
9	Ioannis Kyriakopoulos	Thessaloniki	1776	201
10	Dimitris Triantafillou	Thessaloniki	1753	190

Guatemala

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Number
1	Adrian M Daigle	Guatemala City	1669	32
2	Gustavo Lara	Guatemala City	1652	27
3	Jaime G Veliz	Guatemala	1641	95
4	Felipe Marroquin	Guatemala	1641	63
5	Jose L Lemus	Guatemala	1639	22
6	Ronald Marroquin	Antigua	1638	19
7	Aldo Sandova	Peten	1630	37
8	Victor Solano	Guatemala	1628	71
9	Alberto Alonzo	Guatemala	1611	11
10	Oscar Valladares	Guatemala	1620	17

Hong Kong

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Number
1	Johnson Wan	Hong Kong	2047	441
2	Weng Lak Tam	Hong Kong	2030	484
3	Ngai Kwok Hing	Hong Kong	1900	1000
4	Kai Cheong Tang	Hong Kong	1877	417
5	King Yim Kingston Tong	Hong Kong	1855	405
6	Chun Hung Weng	Hong Kong	1849	487
7	Shing Hong, Aaron Ngai	Hong Kong	1840	1000
8	Ng Teddy	Hong Kong	1834	806
9	Kai Yip Lee	Kowloon	1828	141
10	William F Bedoucha	Hong Kong	1826	243

Hungary

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Number
1	Gabor Papp	Budapest	1896	361
1	Zsolt Tokoli	Budapest	1893	811
3	Durham Michael	Budapest	1844	318
4	Károly Lipták	Budapest	1824	341
5	Viktor Rovo	Budapest	1818	1000
6	Tihor Miklós	Budapest	1813	247
7	Lázár Szabo	Budapest	1800	288
8	Marcell Kardos	Budapest	1786	290
9	Gardos Gergely	Budapest	1777	1000
10	Zoltan Simon	Budapest	1774	231

Iceland

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Number
1	Arelius S Arnlaugsson	Reykjavik	1827	741
2	Yngvi mar Sigfwarsson	Reykjavik	1799	148
3	Stefan Fridriksson	Reykjavik	1771	141
4	Ragnar Mar Kjartansson	Reykjavik	1681	71
5	Arni St Sigurdsson	Reykjavik	1677	1000
6	Thorir Thorgeirsson	Hafnarfjordur	1673	137
7	Einar Agust Baldvinsson	Reykjavik	1667	1000
8	Klas Lofstrom	Reykjavik	1665	44
9	Indridi Ingi Stefansson	Reykjavik	1658	1000
10	Johann Moller	Reykjavik	1657	81
10	Egill V Stefansson	Reykjavik	1657	41

Indonesia

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Number
1	Donny Kristianto	Surabaya	1835	1000
2	Rudy Widjaja	Jakarta Utara	1813	227
3	Velly Hadiwidjaja	Jakarta	1806	116
4	Dennis Yuliadinata	Jakarta	1792	253
5	Andy Budiharto	Surabaya	1785	188
6	Oliver Suryatenggara	Tangerang	1783	173
7	Kawi Santosa	Jakarta Utara	1756	279
8	Jonsen Sulaeman	Jakarta Barat	1752	96
9	Andreas B Pranoto	Bandung	1751	172
10	Yohannes P Siagian	Jakarta Pusat	1750	288

Ireland

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Number
1	Stewart Shinkins	Limerick	1925	342
2	John Larkin	Dublin	1899	438
3	David Kearney	Dublin	1867	1000
4	Eoin Brosnan	Sword	1805	467
5	Diarmuid P Quirke	Cork	1800	211
5	Thomas McDonnell	Limerick	1800	216
7	Iustin Walsh	Limerick	1795	177
8	Robert Mckeon	Dublin	1791	275
8	Cormac Smyth	Cork	1791	188
10	Ed Moynihan	Dublin	1777	175

Israel

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Number
1	Gal Singer	Ramat Gan	1875	288
2	Baruch Kanchi	Rishon	1825	286
3	Nadav Zivelin	Tel Aviv	1799	175
4	Eyal Leshem	Jerusalem	1793	162
5	Orr Bildner	Ra'anana	1788	180
6	Daniel Bird	Haifa	1782	267
7	Ayal Hassidim	Ramat Gan	1749	86
8	Danny S Yosef	Kiriat Mouzkin	1748	53
8	Alex Shtemshain	Haifa	1748	98
10	Tom Teman	Tel Aviv	1735	130

Italy

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Number
1	Andrea Sanvito	Trieste	1941	1000
2	Antonino De Rosa	Palermo	1900	581
3	Norberto Giusti	S Lazzaro	1896	1000
4	Federico Dato	Roma	1936	973
5	Roberto Focherini	Modena	1916	1000
6	Claudio Negrini	Soliera	1906	461
7	Luca Chiera	Roma	1900	741
8	William Cavaglier	Brescia	1898	534
9	Marco Benifei	Prato	1892	1000
10	Tommaso Natale	Roma	1887	607
10	Andrea Paselli	Bologna	1887	1000

Japan

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Number
1	Katsuhiro Mori	Setagaya-ku	1953	890
2	Matsuo Goro	Kahoku-Gun	2013	517
3	Jin Okamoto	Tokyo	2012	917
4	Eisaku Itadani	Okayama	1994	668
5	Tsuyoshi Fujita	Tokyo	1987	1000
6	Tomoharu Saito	Fukushima-Ken	1985	408
7	Masaya Mori	Tokyo	1973	1000
8	Masahiko Morita	Toyonaka-shi	1946	623
9	Koichiro Maki	Tokyo	1941	953
10	Yoshikazu Ishii	Tokorozawa	1940	376

Luxembourg

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Number
1	Thomas Vaz	Dudelange	1843	298
2	Romain Clode	Kayl	1775	93
3	Charles Delvaux	Luxembourg	1741	1000
4	Daniel Gallion	Kayl	1740	133
5	Fabrice Caurla	Monderlange	1697	81
6	Steve Bruck	Fentange	1666	195
7	jhemp Weihnachter	Luxembourg	1661	111
8	Alain Gerst	Aspelt	1659	51
8	Vincenzo Latronico	Luxembourg	1658	41
10	Dan Steimetz	Bollendorf	1658	28

Malaysia

		Petaling Jaya	1867	395
2	Teh T Soon Leong		1849	218
3	Wesley Wei San	Kuala Lumpur	1836	532
4	Lim Jian Liang J Lim	Kuala Lumpur	1832	229
5	Wai Kin Au Yong	Petaling Jaya	1830	270
6	Weng Kwong Aw Yeong		1825	176
7	Mun Wye Tang	Penang	1804	218
8	Ong Y Yung Tiam Sr.	Selangor	1786	318
8	Rudolph LaFaber	Petaling Jaya	1786	181
8	Tishen Tham	Kuala Lumpur	1786	298

Mexico

	Gerardo Godinez	Nezahualcoyotl	1831	387
2	Alexander Sacal	Mexico City	1825	546
3	Francisco B Barboza II	Mexico City	1808	144
4	Messaoud Bouchaib	Guadalajara	1805	481
5	Hugo Araiza	Mexico City	1801	198
6	Gustavo G Chapela	Mexico City	1800	81
7	Enric Rodamilans	Mexico City	1800	174
8	Carlos A Medina	Mexico City	1800	224
9	Luis U Ramos	Mexico City	1795	157
10	Jorge G Gonzalez III	Mexico City	1795	427

Netherlands

1	Tom van de Logt	Geesteren	2111	1000
	Frank Karsten	Heerlen	1900	536
3	Kamiel K Cornelissen	Enschede	1841	198
4	Joost Vollebregt	Leusden	1805	641
	Bram Snepvangers	Utrecht	1801	1731
	Noah Boeken	Hengelo	1798	991
	Wessel Oomens	Amsterdam	1781	1000
8	Alexander Witt	Amsterdam	1766	911
9	Jelger Wiegersma	Eindhoven	1716	1000
10	Jeroen Bense	Dongen	1718	532

New Zealand

	Roger J Mills	Lower Hutt	1904	435
2	Kerel J Laycock	Palmerston North	1874	222
3	James T White	Wellington	1847	333
4	Jonathan Aumonier		1842	151
5	Christopher C Wilson	Auckland	1838	323
6	Mark I Simpson	Auckland	1837	375
7	Julian Brown-Santirso	Christchurch	1831	345
8	David Bullock	Auckland	1826	288
9	John Lf Denz	Auckland	1824	306
10	Digby L Carter	Christchurch	1815	232

Northern Ireland

	David Gray	Belfast	1844	467
2	Thomas Michael Carlisle	Carrickfergus	1811	141
3	Martin F Deery		1786	581
4	Adrian Donnelly	Belfast	1771	251
5	Colin McBurney	County Armagh	1761	1000
6	Andrew Wynne	County Antrim	1741	191
7	Ryan R Harvey		1700	191
8	Ronan Donnelly	Antrim	1700	281
9	Mark Hunter	Belfast	1701	1000
10	Thomas Monaghan	Holywood, Co Down	1633	141

Norway

1	Eivind Nitter	Oslo	1900	2000
2	Sturla Bingen	Solheimsviken	1900	671
3	Bjørn P Jocumsen	Jessheim	1900	1000
4	Sigurd A Eskeland	Oslo	1819	1211
5	Christer Ljones	Lindås	1900	1000
6	Nicolai Herzog	Oslo	1813	1221
7	Thomas F Gundersen	Trondheim	1900	1000
8	Øyvind Ødegaard	Oslo	1814	1411
9	Ian Pieter Groenhof	Oslo	1775	411
10	Erik Nebell	Mårvik	1834	825

Peru

1	Steven Hoyos	Lima	1838	2000
2	Waldry De Oliveira S.	Lima	1765	111
3	Jorge Talav Melgar	Lima	1737	216
4	Juan Carlos Fort	Lima	1731	229
5	Eduardo Paredes	Lima	1725	1000
6	Luis Carranza	Lima	1719	128
7	Juan Pablo Bairzola Haro	Lima	1707	109
8	Enrique Sanders	Lima	1694	67
	Castaneda Mario	Lima	1688	105
10	Arturo Jaime	Lima	1684	149

Philippines

1	Felix F Gonzales	Cebu City	1847	841
2	Richie Chua	Quezon City	1831	287
3	Charles V Racelis		1814	231
4	Francis Robert M Profeta	Manila	1809	981
5	Dominic T Ortega	Manila	1811	191
6	Aldrin Demavivas	Manila	1809	137
7	Mark C Herrin	Quezon City	1810	1000
8	Harold Sy	Pasig	1800	284
		Makati City	1800	1000
		Las Pinas	1800	346
			1800	1000

Poland

	Pawel Karaszewski	Warsaw	1833	1000
	Przemek Oberbek	Warsaw	1808	1000
	Radoslaw Gromko	Białystok	1800	671
	Marcin Goral Horecki Sr.	Zakopane	1800	411
	Maciej Szylman	Bydgoszcz	1800	1000
	Krzysztof Domaszewski	Warsaw	1800	1000
	Adrian Ciszek	Krakow	1800	1000
	Marcin Sados	Warsaw	1800	1000
	Marcin Cieslikowski	Krakow	1800	1000
10	Lukasz Gerson	Tychy	1824	363

Portugal

1	Luis M Sousa	Lisbon	1964	658
2	Frederico M B P Bastos	Lisbon	1959	769
3	Rui Mariani	Lisbon	1926	670
4	Pedro N Bailadeira	Forte da Casa	1909	336
5	Helder L Coelho	Lisbon	1903	688
6	Filipe Gsg Girao	Lisbon	1893	588
7	Pedro M Maccos	Loule Vale Formoso	1875	336
8	Mario Nunez	Springfield	1872	364
9	Ruben G Caetano	Fuseta	1861	481
10	Tiago Chan	Lisbon	1858	548

Russian Federation

1	Sergey Norin	Saint Petersburg	1846	1038
	Albert Khamzin	Novosibirsk	1840	584
	Alexey Smirnov Esq.	Saint Petersburg	1833	628
4	Eugene Nefedov D.V.M.	Saint Petersburg	1828	1205
	Konstantin Firsov	Saint Petersburg	1811	818
	Gustam Bakirov	Moscow	1811	787
	Peter M Danushevskey		1811	221
8	Alexander M Dikhnov	Saint Petersburg	1810	1000
9	Tskha Dmitry M.D.	Novosibirsk	1809	557
10	Sergey I Gimov	Saint Petersburg	1827	842

Scotland

1	Silas E Bath	Dundee	1882	658
	Edward J A Ross	Beith	1872	487
	Darryl Tweedale	Penicuik	1870	425
4	Rob T Brooks	Dundee	1843	605
	Andrew Tee	Dundee	1824	287
	Robert J Horne	Edinburgh	1808	209
7	Benjamin Sanders	Midlothian	1807	513
7	Julian Haigh	Perth	1807	1305
9	Matthew Hay	Livingston	1805	555
10	Alasdair Young	Glasgow	1803	511

Singapore

1	Albertus Law	Singapore	1900	781
2	Ming Huang Royce Chai	Singapore	1900	247
	Dave Yuen Poong		1900	831
4	Yujian Zhou		1900	476
5	Sam, Lei Kang Lau	Singapore	1900	1000
6	Robin Hee Tee Pong	Singapore	1900	434
7	Mark J Chang	Singapore	1900	281
8	Soon Lye Ng	Singapore	1872	609
9	Nicholas Jonathan Wong	Singapore	1867	1000
10	Junxing Junyang	Singapore	1846	723

Slovak Republic

			1900	477
		Bratislava	1900	611
			1900	716
		Bratislava	1900	1000
		Bratislava	1900	414
		Bratislava	1900	1000
		Bratislava	1877	214
		Bratislava	1900	1000
		Bratislava	1900	1000
		Bratislava	1900	1000
10	Dandor Szegho	Senec	1763	262

Slovenia

1	Jakob Tomse	Ljubljana	1900	1000
2	Matej Brezavscek	Ljubljana	1884	236
3	Ziga Skrbec	Ljubljana	1900	1000
4	Lavs Primoz	Ljubljana	1845	231
5	Andrej Brglez	Brestemica	1900	1000
6	Andrej A Renko	Ljubljana	1900	1000
7	Anze Avsec	Ljubljana	1900	1000
8	Ziga Fritz	Piran	1787	471
9	Andrej Brezavscek	Ljubljana	1778	1000
10	Gregor Strubelj	Krsko	1771	375

South Africa

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Andrew J Mitchell	Cape Town	2012	552
2	Jason J Neale	Pretoria	1904	363
3	David P Hofmeyr	Johannesburg	1884	429
4	Andrew C Maxwell	Cape Town	1880	508
5	Steve Gerson	Johannesburg	1858	384
6	Grant Van Dyk	Cape Town	1856	463
7	Pieter W Loubser	Bellville	1854	343
8	Andrew C Klein	Cape Town	1848	349
9	Christiaan Du Plessis	Pietersburg	1846	161
10	Alan Cliff Campbell	Cape Town	1843	402

South Korea

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Sang Seok Lee	Seoul	1793	162
2	Heung Jin Jung	Seoul	1776	215
3	Ji-Hoon Kim	Seoul	1772	160
4	Joo-Ho Lee	Seoul	1747	244
5	Dong-Woo Son	Seoul	1731	186
6	Hak-Hyun Kim	Seoul	1725	42
7	Joo-Nyeon Kim	Seoul	1718	168
8	Sang-Kyeol Lee	Seoul	1715	205
9	Kim Won-Kyung	Seoul	1708	48
10	Bryan Heal	Seoul	1700	92
10	Won-Ho Son	Seoul	1700	

Spain

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Daniel Bethencourt	Canarias	1959	478
2	Hector Fuentes	Valencia	1951	334
3	Paco Francisco Llopis	Valencia	1935	361
4	Ferran F Vila	Barcelona	1913	332
5	Carlos Barrado	Madrid	1904	401
6	Ivan Garcia	Las Palmas	1889	166
7	Daniel Hidalgo	Canarias	1881	281
8	Roc Herms Pont	Rubi	1870	541
9	Carlos Gomez Villota	Madrid	1869	314
10	Javier Perez-Fresneda	Barcelona	1861	385

Sweden

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Jon Thorn	Umea	1983	463
2	Ola Rudh	Goteborg	1982	598
3	Thomas H Rosholm	Malmoe	1971	358
4	Poya Nobari	Linkoping	1946	215
5	Kristian Hellman	Malmo	1937	300
6	Rickard Osterberg	Goteborg	1931	488
7	Jimmy Oman	Goteborg	1827	452
8	Mattias A Kettil	Molndal	1934	461
9	Marcus Angelin	Stockholm	1911	522
10	Johan F Franzen	Vasteras	1896	385

Switzerland

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Dave Kummer	Bern	1960	210
2	Niklaus Hugi	Thun	1926	429
3	Martin Zuercher	Biglen	1911	447
4	Gennaro Raphael	Geneve	1910	484
5	Sebastien Gyger	Geneve	1895	161
6	Alexander Blumke	Geneva	1863	377
7	Marco Saggese	Geneve	1858	330
8	Matthias Kunzler	Bern	1853	406
9	Oliver Schaller	Wettingen bei Baden	1846	231
10	Clement Fredembach	Servion	1846	255

Taiwan

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Tomas Tsuang	Kaohsiung	1926	1373
2	Peter Chen	Taipei	1895	589
3	Jack Chu	Taipei	1890	441
4	Vice Lin	Taipei	1887	402
5	Ku Chang Ching	Taipei	1871	464
6	Hwang C Chang	Taipei	1868	474
7	Tzu Ching C Kuo	Taipei	1867	380
8	Chien-Ming Jen	Taipei	1854	494
9	Lucifar Sun	Taipei	1841	380
10	Dail Sun	Taichu	1841	324

Thailand

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Hongkol Tachasukjai	Bangkok	1830	330
2	Chet Surapanpitak	Bangkok	1785	262
3	Phattharasert Yeodkofkij	Bangkok	1778	136
4	Narrasus Ayutthaya	Chatuchak	1755	103
5	Prapon Maneecharoenwong	Bangkok	1746	146
6	Wattanachai Chenarak	Bangkok	1744	231
7	Worawis Praditbatuka	Bangkok	1744	98
8	Aon Limpadanai	Bangkok	1742	212
9	Phumchai Sirapongtraklul	Bangkok	1732	76
9	Bhunchai Jirapongtraklul	Sumutsakorn	1732	205
9	Phuet Suwansunthorn	Bangkok	1732	90

Turkey

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Basar Coskunoglu	Istanbul	1857	200
2	Vedat Ozpinar	Istanbul	1853	144
3	Aras Senyuz	Istanbul	1826	324
4	Burcak Caner	Istanbul	1824	142
5	Hakki N Ozbasli	Izmir	1802	237
6	Onur Konuralp	Istanbul	1801	163
7	Yusuf K Vefa	Istanbul	1768	269
8	Bora Davran	Istanbul	1755	152
9	Sarp Ovunmen	Istanbul	1752	191
9	Gokhan Sunnik	Istanbul	1752	56

Ukraine

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Yuri Kolomeyko	Kiev	1847	226
2	Andrey Rybalchenko	Kiev	1846	433
3	Nik Koretsky	Kiev	1797	781
4	Boris S Zlotoiabko	Kiev	1796	532
5	Alexander V Kolesnikov	Kiev	1787	457
6	Nick Szmovatov	Kiev	1782	596
7	Alexey Romanenko	Kiev	1781	341
8	Victor F Zhubrzhitsky	Kiev	1760	482
9	Ivan Kulbich	Kiev	1735	581
10	Les Aaksidorov	Kiev	1734	566

United Arab Emirates

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Mark Marsden	Dubai	1795	318
2	Jordan Gallant	Dubai	1721	171
3	Krishak Menon	Dubai	1693	133
4	Jeff Kearns	Abu Dhabi	1673	188
5	Russell Mason	Dubai	1672	223
6	Dylan Koopman	Dubai	1658	20
7	Sina Al-Rais	Dubai	1652	33
8	James C Dabbs	Abu Dhabi	1644	58
9	Ian Snowden	Dubai	1635	61
10	Shaun Price	Dubai	1634	69

United States

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Jon Finkel	New Hampshire	2132	1264
2	Alex B Borteh	Delaware	2107	583
3	Brock R Parker	Silver Spring	2091	796
4	Chris Benafel	Eugene	2080	1529
5	David A Williams	Dallas	2070	1343
6	Brian A Selden	San Diego	2065	826
7	Michael S Turian	Pittsburgh	2048	858
8	Neil N Reeves	Little Rock	2047	927
9	Thomas D Jensen III	Maine	2044	1124
10	Eugene B Harvey	Hillsborough	2044	291

Uruguay

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Scott C Richards	Montevideo	1900	543
2	Victor H Pintos	Montevideo	1866	433
3	Damian A Brown-Santoro	Montevideo	1811	511
4	Ismael Carnales	Montevideo	1809	273
5	Jose Lladoy	Montevideo	1807	438
6	Rodrigo Raf Asuaga	Montevideo	1794	243
7	Juan Ghiringhelli	Montevideo	1771	184
8	Javier Chiossi	Montevideo	1767	265
9	Fernando Veiga	Montevideo	1764	264
10	Diego Lafuente	Montevideo	1756	198

Venezuela

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Jhonatan Alves	Caracas	1823	154
1	Eduardo MuÑoz	Caracas	1803	116
3	Edward R Peraza	Barquisimeto	1781	260
4	Michel C Leon	Caracas	1775	192
5	Ramon A Hernandez	Caracas	1735	186
6	Marco A Baposta	Barquisimeto	1733	192
6	Jose J da Silva	Caracas	1733	81
8	Eduardo Lugo	Caracas	1726	161
9	Jhonny A Hernandez	Cabudare	1719	302
10	Jhonnie A Goncalves	San Antonio	1718	87

Wales

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Richard W Edbury	Cardiff	1935	829
2	Jimmy Chung	Porthcawl	1814	590
3	Ioan H Lloyd	Swansea	1805	258
4	Madog Williams	Cardiff	1796	490
5	Richard Bevan	Cardiff	1781	447
6	Stephen Baker	Penarth	1766	211
7	Craig Earlam	Buckley	1756	345
8	Simon Cox	Mid Glamorgan	1752	231
9	Stephen Brown	Cardiff	1741	188
10	David S Maher	Swansea	1740	362

Yugoslavia

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Vladimir V Kamenov	Novi Sad	1915	331
2	Ilija Ambo	Veternik	1719	191
3	Daniel Casnji	Novi Sad	1706	216
4	Dane Basta	Novi Sad	1702	168
5	Uros Golik	Novi Sad	1701	85
6	Milan R Raicevic	Belgrad	1687	47
7	Sraan Mojsic	Zemun	1675	11
8	Milos Milinkovic	Beograd	1673	38
9	Vladimir Prelovac	Beograd	1661	15
10	Dusan Kostapic	Novi Sad	1658	259

Ask the DCI

by Jeff Donais

Sideboard *accepts questions from readers and has many of them handled by DCI staff members. In some cases, questions may be answered by R&D staff,* Sideboard *magazine staff,* **Magic** *Rules Team members, tournament organizers, or other appropriate personnel. If you have a question, email Jeff Donais at* jdonais@wizards.com.

How much total prize money is given out each year through Magic tournaments?

Let's tally the amounts from the 2001 calendar year:

$400,000+	World Championships
$1,000,000	5 Pro Tour events
$875,000	35 Grand Prix events
$150,000	3 Continental Championships
$240,000	50+ National Championships
$500,000	1,000 Pro Tour Qualifiers
$600,000	4 Masters Series competitions
$100,000	Junior Super Series Championship
$300,000	300 Junior Super Series Challenges

That's over $4 million in prize money, just from Wizards of the Coast tournaments. That doesn't include product prizes or prizes from the 100,000+ tournaments run by individual tournament organizers.

How are Pro Tour locations selected?

Several criteria factor into deciding where to hold Pro Tour events. We run six Pro Tours a year (including Worlds).

We try to rotate the World Championships between North America, APAC, and Europe. For example, we held Worlds in Tokyo in 1999, Brussels in 2000, Toronto in 2001, and will be holding Worlds in Sydney in 2002 and Berlin in 2003. We try to select cities that have international recognition.

We hold a Pro Tour event in Japan and Europe each year and three Pro Tours in North America. This selection is based both on the size of the regions and the number of players in the regions. We try to pick cities that are easy for international travel and have a large media presence in order to get the best marketing and public relations opportunities. The Japanese Pro Tour will probably alternate between the cities of Tokyo and Osaka. The European Pro Tour will probably go into the most popular **Magic** playing countries, such as England, Italy, France, Germany, and occasionally The Netherlands and Spain. The North American Pro Tour will almost always go to the biggest cities such as Los Angeles and New York, but will also go to other big cities, like Atlanta, Houston, New Orleans, Boston, San Diego, Chicago, and so on.

What is "amateur status"?

Players start with amateur status and lose the status as soon as they earn any pro points. Pro points are earned by placing in the Top 32 of a Grand Prix or by attending a Pro Tour event or the World Championships.

Amateur status is important for Grand Prix prizes and the Amateur Championship. If you enter a Grand Prix without having ever earned a pro point, you are eligible for the Amateur Award (usually an extra $7,500—just for players without pro points). Only players without pro points may enter the annual Amateur Championship. For more information, check out the **Magic** Tournament Policy at **thedci.com**.

Can a player with a bye play in a Grand Prix Trial?

Yes, a player with any amount of byes may play in a Grand Prix Trial. If a player with a bye would win an amount of byes greater than which that which they already have, the byes pass down to the next eligible player. For example, if a player with three byes wins a Grand Prix Trial, those three byes pass down to the second-place finisher (or the next-highest finisher without three byes).

DCI Format Construction Rules

For the most updated DCI deck construction rules, check thedci.com

Standard

Permitted Sets
Seventh Edition
Odyssey
[illegible]
Invasion Block

Banned Cards
None

Extended

Permitted Sets
Fifth Edition
Sixth Edition (Classic)
Seventh Edition
Ice Age
Homelands
Alliances
[illegible]
Visions
Weatherlight
Tempest
Stronghold
Exodus
Urza's Saga
[illegible]
Invasion
Planeshift
Apocalypse
Odyssey
[illegible] dual lands

Banned Cards
Amulet of Quoz
Dark Ritual
Demonic Consultation
Dream Halls
Earthcraft
Lotus Petal
Mana Vault
Memory Jar
Mind Over Matter
Necropotence
Replenish
Survival of the Fittest
Time Spiral
Timmerian Fiends
Tolarian Academy
Windfall
Yawgmoth's Bargain
Yawgmoth's Will
Zuran Orb

Invasion Block Constructed

Permitted Sets
Invasion
Planeshift
Apocalypse

Banned Cards
None

Masques Block Constructed

Permitted Sets
Mercadian Masques
Nemesis
Prophecy

Banned Cards
Lin Sivvi, Defiant Hero
[illegible]dan Port

Urza Block Constructed

Permitted Sets
Urza's Saga
Urza's Legacy
Urza's Destiny

Banned Cards
Gaea's Cradle
Memory Jar
[illegible]

Tempest Block Constructed

Permitted Sets
Tempest
Stronghold
Exodus

Banned Cards
Cursed Scroll

Mirage Block Constructed

Permitted Sets
Mirage
Visions
Weatherlight

Banned Cards
Squandered Resources

Ice Age Block Constructed

Permitted Sets
Ice Age
Alliances
Homelands

Banned Cards
Amulet of Quoz
Thawing Glaciers
Timmerian Fiends
Zuran Orb

Type 1

Permitted Sets
All basic and expansion sets
Promotional cards

Banned Cards
Amulet of Quoz
Bronze Tablet
Chaos Orb
Contract from Below
Darkpact
Demonic Attorney
Falling Star
Jeweled Bird
Rebirth
Tempest Efreet
Timmerian Fiends

Restricted Cards
Ancestral Recall
Balance
Berserk
Black Lotus
Black Vise
Braingeyser
Channel
Crop Rotation
Demonic Consultation
Demonic Tutor
Doomsday
Dream Halls
Enlightened Tutor
Fastbond
Flash
Frantic Search
Gush
Hermit Druid
Ivory Mutation
Library of Alexandria
Lotus Petal
Mana Crypt
Mana Vault
Memory Jar
Mind Over Matter
Mind Twist
Mox Diamond
Mox Emerald
Mox Jet
Mox Pearl
Mox Ruby
Mox Sapphire
Mystical Tutor
Necropotence
Recall
Regrowth
Sol Ring
Strip Mine
Stroke of Genius
Time Spiral
Time Walk
Timetwister
Tinker
Tolarian Academy
Vampiric Tutor
Yawgmoth's Bargain
Yawgmoth's Will
Wheel of Fortune
Windfall
Yawgmoth's Bargain

Type 1.5

Permitted Sets
All basic and expansion sets
[illegible]

Banned Cards
All cards on the Type 1 Banned and Restricted lists

Tournament News

by Jeff Donais

2001 Player of the Year

The 2001 Player of the Year race was won handily by Kai Budde by a margin of 13 pro points. Kai's victory makes him the only player in **Magic** history to win the title twice. As Player of the Year, Kai will receive invitations to all major events of the 2001–2002 season as well as travel and accommodations to all Pro Tour events and to Worlds. The 2002 race is now underway and should prove very interesting because the number of internationally recognized star players is increasing with every event. Throughout the 2001–2002 season, players will accumulate points at Pro Tour and Grand Prix events, and the season culminates with the 2002 World Championships in Sydney. You can follow the Player of the Year race at **Sideboard.com**.

2001 Magic Invitational

The all-star game of **Magic** will visit Capetown, South Africa, October 5–7, 2001. This will be the sixth incarnation of the event, which will feature three days of **Magic** with sixteen of the best players in the world. The creator of the **Magic** Invitational, Mark Rosewater, has a few special events in store for the competitors. Each year, five formats are used, including some wacky ones. Players are invited from all over the world through various categories, from ratings and pro points (as of August 15, 2001) to **Sideboard.com** reader voting and tournament achievements.

The grand prize of the event is, of course, the privilege of making your very own **Magic** card. Previous Invitational Champions Darwin Kastle (Avalanche Riders), Mike Long (Rootwater Thief), Chris Pikula (Meddling Mage), and Jon Finkel (Shadowmage Infiltrator) will live forever as **Magic** cards. **Sideboard.com** will have live coverage of the Invitational as well as of Grand Prix–Capetown.

2001 Invitational Invitees

The players on this list are determined by taking the previously uninvited person who best fits the criteria. For example, Jon Finkel and Tom van de Logt are ranked first and second in the Composite ratings, so Antoine Ruel at third is the highest-ranked *previously uninvited* player.

Last year's Invitational Champion:
Jon Finkel · USA

2001 World Champion:
Tom van de Logt Netherlands

Highest-ranked DCI member:
Antoine Ruel · France

Most pro points:
Kai Budde · Germany

Second-most pro points:
Kamiel Cornelissen · Netherlands

Third-most pro points:
Michael Pustilnik · USA

Fourth-most pro points:
Chris Benafel · USA

Fifth-most pro points
Zvi Mowshowitz · USA

North American player with the most pro points:
Dan Clegg · USA

Latin America player with the most pro points:
Scott Richards · Uruguay

European player with the most pro points:
Ryan Fuller · Netherlands

Asia-Pacific player with the most pro points:
Tsuyoshi Fujita · Japan

First in fan balloting:
Dave Price · USA

Second in fan balloting:
Gary Wise · Canada

Third in fan balloting:
Brian Kibler · USA

Fourth in fan balloting:
Chris Pikula · USA

2001 Invitational Formats

1 Standard with the *Odyssey* set
The top pros will tackle the new format a full three weeks before it's legal in sanctioned Constructed play.

2 Duplicate Limited
All competitors will receive the same pool of cards from which to build their decks.

3 Auction of the People
Competitors will bid for decks using their opening hand sizes and life totals. This year's decks will be creature-type decks, including a Goblin deck, an Elf deck, a Squirrel deck, and so on.

4 Five-Color
This format requires players to build 250-card decks using all five colors. Most older cards from Type 1 are legal—it should be an exciting display!

5 Odyssey Rotisserie Draft
Players draft their cards from a complete set of *Odyssey* cards. Only one copy of each card may be drafted. This format requires a strong knowledge of the set and some preplanning

State Championships

Call them State Championships, Province Championships, Territory Championships, or even Island Championships for our friends in New Zealand. Whatever you call them, they are a lot of fun and they are the first opportunity to try out the new Standard format with the *Odyssey* set. "Champs" are for everyone and feature friendly competition for a modest fee. This year, the Top 8 players from each Championship will receive an exclusive playmat, and the winner will receive a trophy. The second weekend of November heralds the big events. Check out **wizards.com/champs** for more information.

Junior Super Series

All over North America, Junior Super Series (JSS) Challenges are starting up this fall. Each JSS Challenge offers two invitations to the JSS Championship, $1,000 in scholarship money, cool premium cards, and **Magic** boosters. Two new cards have been created for this year's JSS events: a foil City of Brass with the original *Arabian Nights* artwork and a foil Elvish Lyrist with the original *Urza's Saga* artwork. Both cards feature new flavor text and a bronze DCI expansion symbol. The City of Brass is a prize card for top finishers, while the Elvish Lyrist is given to all competitors.

JSS events are always Standard format and are open only to players ages 15 and younger. The season starts in the fall of 2001 and ends in the spring of 2002. The final tournament of the season will be the 2002 Junior Super Series Championship in Orlando, Florida. This exciting event offers $100,000 in scholarship prizes and brings players from around North America to compete. For more information, visit **wizards.com/jss**.

Elvish Lyrist
Creature — Elf
City of Brass
Land
Whenever City of Brass becomes tapped, it deals 1 damage to you.
Add one mana of any color to your mana pool.
"Enter this palace-gate and ask the news
Of greatness fallen into dust and glory."
—The Arabian Nights, trans. Burton

Events Calendar

September 2001–August 2002

August–September **Qualifier Season for Pro Tour–New Orleans** Block Constructed

SEPTEMBER

1–2 **Grand Prix–London** Block Constructed
1–2 **Grand Prix–Singapore** Block Constructed
7–9 **Pro Tour–New York** Team Sealed Deck w/ Booster Draft
8–9 **Grand Prix–Warsaw** Block Constructed
22–23 **Grand Prix–Oslo** Block Constructed
22–23 ***Odyssey* Prerelease** Sealed Deck
29–30 **Grand Prix–Minneapolis** Block Constructed

OCTOBER

October–November **Qualifier Season for Pro Tour–San Diego** Sealed w/ Rochester Draft Finals
1 ***Odyssey* Official Release Date**
5–7 **Magic Invitational–Cape Town**
6–7 **Grand Prix–Cape Town** Sealed Deck w/ Rochester Draft
6–7 **Grand Prix–Vienna** Sealed Deck w/ Rochester Draft
13–14 **Grand Prix–Montreal** Sealed Deck w/ Rochester Draft
13–14 **Grand Prix–Shizuoka** Sealed Deck w/ Rochester Draft
20–21 **Grand Prix–Brisbane** Sealed Deck w/ Rochester Draft

NOVEMBER

1–4 **Masters Series–New Orleans** Booster Draft
2–4 **Pro Tour–New Orleans** Extended
10–11 **State/Provincial/Territory/Island Championships** Standard
17–18 **Grand Prix–Atlanta** Sealed Deck w/ Rochester Draft
17–18 **Grand Prix–Hong Kong** Sealed Deck w/ Rochester Draft
24–25 **Grand Prix–Biarritz** Sealed Deck w/ Rochester Draft

DECEMBER

December–January **Qualifier Season for Pro Tour–Osaka** Extended
8–9 **Grand Prix–Las Vegas** Extended
8–9 **Grand Prix–Curitiba** Extended
15–16 **Grand Prix–Sendai** Extended

JANUARY 2002

10–13 **Masters Series–San Diego** Standard
11–13 **Pro Tour–San Diego** Rochester Draft
26–27 ***Torment* Prerelease** Sealed Deck

FEBRUARY

February–April **Qualifier Season for Pro Tour–Nice** Sealed Deck w/ Booster Draft Finals
4 ***Torment* Release Date**

MARCH

14–17 **Masters Series–Osaka** Team Rochester Draft
15–17 **Pro Tour–Osaka** Block Constructed

APRIL

tbd **US/Canada Regionals** Standard

MAY

May–July **Qualifier Season for Pro Tour–New York** Team Sealed w/ Rochester Draft Finals
tbd **Grand Prix–Nagoya** Team Sealed w/ Rochester Finals
2–5 **Masters Series–Nice** Extended
3–5 **Pro Tour–Nice** Booster Draft
18–19 ***Judgment* Prerelease** Sealed Deck
27 ***Judgment* Release Date**
31–June 2 **Junior Super Series Championship–Orlando** Standard
31–June 2 **United States National Championship–Orlando** Standard & Booster Draft

JUNE

14–16 **Canada National Championship—Toronto** Standard & Booster Draft

JULY

4–7 **Origins International Game Expo & Fair–Columbus**
6 **Amateur Championship** at **Origins** Standard

AUGUST

August–September **Qualifier Season for Pro Tour–Houston** Block Constructed
10 ***Sideboard* Team Challenge** at **Gen Con** (nonsanctioned)
8–11 **Gen Con Game Fair–Milwaukee**
14–18 **World Championships–Sydney** Standard, Booster Draft & Extended

Subject to Change

Events, dates, locations, and formats may change, especially for tournaments farther ahead in the schedule. Check wizards.com/tournaments for the most up-to-date event information.

Event Coverage

Sideboard Online provides live coverage of many tournaments around the world. Check *Sideboard* Event Coverage section at www.sideboard.com for more information.

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